



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



RECON











THE HISTORY  
OF THE  
**Protestant Reformation,**  
IN  
**Germany and Switzerland,**  
AND IN  
**ENGLAND, IRELAND; SCOTLAND, THE NETHERLANDS,  
FRANCE, AND NORTHERN EUROPE.**

**In a Series of Essays;**

**REVIEWING D'AUBIGNÉ, MENZEL, HALLAM, BISHOP SHORT, PRESCOTT, RANKE  
FRYXELL, AND OTHERS.**

**IN TWO VOLUMES.**

**By M. J. SPALDING, D. D.**  
**ARCHBISHOP OF BALTIMORE.**



**VOL. I.**

**REFORMATION IN GERMANY AND SWITZERLAND.**

**SIXTH REVISED EDITION.**

---

**BALTIMORE:**  
**PUBLISHED BY JOHN MURPHY & CO.**  
**182 BALTIMORE STREET.**  
**LOUISVILLE...WEBB & LEVERING.**  
**1870.**

5254011X

---

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1860, by  
R. T. REV. M. J. SPALDING,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the District  
of Kentucky.

---

LOAN STAMP

BR 305  
S7  
1870  
v. 1  
MAN

## PREFACE TO VOLUME I.

ABOUT twenty years ago I published a Review of D'Aubigné's History of the Reformation in Germany and Switzerland. The edition having been soon exhausted, I was often called on by friends to issue a second one; but circumstances beyond my control long prevented me from acceding to their request. During the interval, several editions of D'Aubigné's work were published both in England and America, and two or more new volumes were added, continuing the history of the German and Swiss Reformation, and commencing that of England. No notice, however, was taken by the author, so far as I have been able to discover, of the facts and reasoning contained in the Review, though the latter was republished in Ireland, and pretty widely circulated.

In preparing a second edition, I at first hesitated whether it would be worth while to pay any further attention to a writer, who is clearly so bitter a partisan, and so wholly unreliable as an historian. His pretended history is, in fact, little better than a romance. He omits more than half the facts, and either perverts or draws on his imagination for the remainder. This may seem a strong accusation; but it is amply borne out by the authorities and specifications contained in the Review. Having started out, it would seem, with the pre-determination to paint the German Reformers as saints, and the Reformation as the work of God, he makes every thing bend to his preconceived theory.

Still, as his work continued to be read, and perhaps believed by a considerable number of sincere persons, I decided to re-issue the Review in an amended and considerably enlarged form, in order that those, who really wished to discover the whole truth in regard to the Reformation, might have an opportunity to read at least some of the facts on the other side. But, at the same time, I thought it better to enlarge the plan of the work, and to embrace in it Essays on the rise and history of the Reformation in all the other principal countries of Europe.

This is done in the second Volume, in which is furnished a summary of the principal facts connected with the rise and progress of the Reformation in England, Ireland, Scotland, the Netherlands, France, and Northern Europe. These Essays are mostly Reviews of different Protestant works, and hence the style of the Reviewer, which had been adopted in the original publication, has been preserved throughout both Volumes: .

The range of the present publication is thus very wide; and I feel that I have not been able, in so brief a compass, to do full justice to a subject, upon which so many learned volumes have been written on both sides. Still I am conscious of having honestly endeavored to do whatever I was able, to throw light upon a department of history so very important in itself and in its practical bearings, and so little understood among our separated brethren.

My principal object has been, to condense within a brief space a considerable amount of facts and authorities, which are scattered over many works not easily accessible to the mass of readers. Seeking to be useful rather than original, I have preferred to let others speak, whenever I thought their testimony would be likely to prove more weighty than my own words or reasoning. I have hence generally preferred Protestant to Catholic testimony; and the only merit I claim, besides that of an honest and earnest wish to promote the cause of truth, is that of some industry in collecting, and endeavoring to condense and knit together Protestant authorities, in regard to the character of the Reformers and of the Reformation. The testimony of such witnesses is not likely to be undervalued or impeached by those who are outside the Catholic Church.

Prefixed to the first Volume, will be found an Introductory Essay on the religious and moral condition of Europe before the Reformation; and to the second, a similar one on England during the centuries which preceded the reign of Henry VIII. These general views are deemed important for a better understanding and a more correct appreciation of the Reformation itself, the champions of which are in the habit of justifying it on the ground of alleged abuses and corruptions running through many centuries, and deemed incurable by any other means than that of total separation from the Old Church of our fathers. I have also added, at the end of each Volume, some Notes containing valuable documentary evidence.

The work, thus enlarged in the second edition, soon passed to a third; and now the fourth edition is presented, with honest intent to the American Public. If I shall succeed in bringing back even one honest inquirer from the mazes of error into "the One Fold of the One Shepherd," my labor will not have been wholly in vain.

BALTIMORE, *Easter Monday*, 1865.

## **GENERAL DIVISION.**

---

### **INTRODUCTION.**

	<b>PAGE.</b>
<b>VIEW OF EUROPE BEFORE THE REFORMATION, . . . .</b>	<b>17</b>

#### **PART I.**

<b>CHARACTER OF THE REFORMERS, . . . . .</b>	<b>71</b>
--	-----------

#### **PART II.**

<b>CAUSES AND MANNER OF THE REFORMATION; . . . .</b>	<b>102</b>
--	------------

#### **PART III.**

<b>INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON RELIGION, . . . .</b>	<b>221</b>
--	------------

#### **PART IV.**

<b>INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON SOCIETY, . . . .</b>	<b>315</b>
---	------------





# CONTENTS OF VOLUME I.

## INTRODUCTION.

### VIEW OF EUROPE BEFORE THE REFORMATION, pp. 17-70.

UTILITY of this retrospective view .....	17	The Papacy comes out of it unscathed.....	47
The origin of European Governments.....	18	Catholic Reformation.....	47
The Northmen .....	18	Overcoming Scandals .....	49
Rome the Civilizer.....	19	The Hussites.....	50
Protestant testimony.....	20	Preponderance of Good over Evil.....	51
The Pope and the Emperor .....	21	The Monasteries.....	52
Charlemagne.....	21	Dr. Maitland's testimony .....	52
Guelphs and Ghibellines .....	24	Dr. Robertson convicted of gross misrepre- sentations.....	53
Temporal power of the Pope .....	24	Homily of St. Eligius.....	53
Three great facts.....	25	His warning against idolatry and superstition	56
Freedom of the Church.....	26	A model mediæval Homily.....	57
Election of Bishops.....	27	St. Bernard and St. Vincent Ferrer.....	59
Catholic munificence in middle ages .....	28	The Pragmatic Sanction.....	61
The Truce of God .....	30	Its mischievous tendency.....	61
Question of Investitures .....	32	Letter of Pope Pius II.....	62
Horrible abuses.....	32	Preparation for the Reformation.....	63
Gregory VII. and Henry IV.....	32	Revival of Learning.....	63
The Controversy settled .....	35	Art of Printing.....	64
But its germs remain.....	36	Italy leads the way.....	64
Modern historic justice.....	38	Testimony of Macaulay.....	64
Growth of Mammonism.....	39	The Humanists and Dominicans.....	66
Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries.....	40	The Pope and Liberty .....	66
Boniface VIII. and Philip the Fair.....	41	Testimony of Laing.....	67
Faction and heresy.....	44	Summing up.....	67
The new Manicheans.....	44	Four conclusions reached.....	68
The Flagellants.....	45	What we propose to examine and prove.....	70
The Great Schism.....	46		

## PART I.

### CHARACTER OF THE REFORMERS.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### LUTHER AND THE OTHER GERMAN REFORMERS, pp. 71-101.

D'Aubigné's opinion .....	71	His courage and fawning.....	86
A reformed key.....	72	His violence and coarseness.....	87
Luther's parents .....	72	Not excusable by the spirit of his age.....	89
His early training.....	73	His blasphemies.....	89
A naughty boy.....	73	Recrimination .....	89
Convents .....	74	Christian compliments.....	89
Being "led to God," and "not led to God"...	74	"Conference with the devil" .....	90
He enters the Augustinian convent.....	74	Which got the better of the argument .....	90
Austerities .....	75	Luther's morality.....	91
A "bread bag".....	75	Table-talk .....	91
His faith and scruples.....	75	His sermon on marriage.....	92
His humility and zeal.....	76	A Vixen.....	98
Luther a reformer .....	76	How to do "mischief to the Pope" .....	98
Grows worse.....	77	A striking contrast.....	98
Becomes reckless .....	78	How to fulfil vows.....	98
His sincerity tested.....	79	His marriage.....	98
Saying and unsaying.....	80	Misgivings.....	98
Misgivings .....	80	Epigrams and satires.....	98
Tortuous windings .....	81	Curious incidents in his last sickness.....	99
How to spite the Pope .....	83	Death-bed confession.....	100
Curious incident .....	84	His death .....	100
Melancthon and his mother.....	85	The reformed key used.....	101
Luther's talents and eloquence.....	85	Character of the other reformers.....	101
His taste .....	86		

## PART II.

## CAUSES AND MANNER OF THE REFORMATION.

## CHAPTER II.

## CHARACTER OF THE REFORMATION—THEORY OF D'AUBIGNÉ EXAMINED, pp. 102-109.

The question stated.....	102	Why Germany was converted.....	106
D'Aubigné's opinion.....	102	Why Italy and Spain were not.....	106
Mother and daughter.....	103	Luther and Mohammed.....	107
Argumentum ad hominem.....	103	Reasoning by contraries.....	107
Jumping at a conclusion.....	104	Why France continued Catholic.....	108
Second causes.....	106		

## CHAPTER III.

## PRETEXTS FOR THE REFORMATION, pp. 110-128.

Usual plea.....	110	Miltitz and Cardinal Cajetan.....	119
Abuses greatly exaggerated.....	110	Kindness thrown away.....	119
Three questions put and answered.....	111	Luther in tears.....	119
Origin of abuses.....	111	Efforts of Rome.....	120
Free-will unimpaired.....	111	Leo X. and Adrian VI.....	120
Councils to extirpate abuses.....	112	Their forbearance censured by Catholic writers.....	120
Church thwarted by princes and the world.....	113	Their tardy severity justified by D'Aubigné.....	121
Controversy on Investitures.....	113	Luther's real purpose.....	122
Extent of the evil.....	113	The proper remedy.....	122
Sale of indulgences.....	114	The real issue.....	124
St. Peter's Church.....	114	Nullification.....	125
John Tetzel.....	116	"Curing and cutting a throat".....	125
His errors greatly exaggerated.....	116	Luther's avowal.....	126
Public penance.....	117	Admissions of the confession of Augsburg and of Daillé.....	127
License to sin.....	118	Summing up.....	128
Nature of indulgences.....	118		
Tetzel rebuked and his conduct disavowed by Rome.....	118		

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE TRUE CAUSES OF THE REFORMATION, AND THE MEANS BY WHICH IT WAS EFFECTED, pp. 128-167.

Saying of Frederick the Great.....	128	The Reformation and state policy.....	140
What we mean to prove.....	129	The princes become bishops.....	142
Testimony of Hallam.....	129	A reformed dispensation.....	142
Doctrines of Luther.....	131	Character of reformed princes.....	143
Justification without works.....	131	Their cupidity.....	143
Its dreadful consequences avowed.....	131	Fed by Luther.....	143
The "slave-will".....	133	Protestant restitution.....	143
Man, a beast with two riders.....	134	Open violence and sacrilegious spoliation.....	144
Dissuasive from celibacy.....	134	The modus operandi of the Reformation.....	154
An easy way to heaven.....	135	Schlegel again.....	156
D'Aubigné's discreet silence.....	136	Abuse of the press.....	156
Testimony of the Diet of Worms on Luther's doctrines.....	136	Vituperation and calumny.....	159
An old lady emancipated.....	138	Policy of Luther's marriage.....	163
Protection of princes.....	138	Apostate monks.....	163
Schlegel's testimony.....	139	Recapitulation.....	164
The reformers flatter princes and pander to their vices.....	139	A distinction.....	165
Remarkable avowals of Menzel.....	139	The Reformation "a reappearance of Christianity".....	166

CHAPTER V.

THE REFORMATION IN SWITZERLAND—ZURICH, pp. 167-181.

The Reformation in Switzerland more radical than that in Germany.....	168	Protestant martyrs.....	173
Yet like it.....	168	Suppression of the Mass.....	174
Sows dissensions.....	168	Solemnity of the reformed worship.....	175
Zuingli warlike and superstitious.....	169	Downright paganism.....	175
Claims precedency over Luther.....	169	The Reformation and matrimony.....	176
Black or white.....	170	Zuingli's marriage and misgivings.....	177
Precursory disturbances.....	171	Romance among nuns.....	177
Aldermen deciding on faith.....	172	How to get a husband.....	178
How the fortress was entrenched.....	172	Perversion of Scripture.....	179
Riot and conflagration.....	172	St. Paul on celibacy.....	179
Enlightenment.....	173	Récapitulation.....	180

CHAPTER VI.

THE REFORMATION IN SWITZERLAND—BERNE, pp. 181-201.

History by Louis De Haller.....	181	Priests hunted down.....	191
A standard authority.....	181	Character of the ministers.....	192
Berne the centre of operations.....	182	Avowal of Capito.....	192
De Haller's point of view.....	182	The glorious privilege of private judgment.....	192
His character as an historian.....	183	How consistent!.....	193
His authorities.....	183	Persecution of brother Protestants.....	194
Wavering of Berne.....	184	Drowning the Anabaptists.....	194
Tortuous policy.....	185	Reformation in Geneva.....	194
How she embraced the reform.....	185	Rapid summary of horrors.....	195
The bear and the pears.....	185	The Bernese army of invasion.....	195
Treacherous perjury of Berne.....	186	The sword and the Bible.....	195
Zuinglian council.....	186	Forbearance of Catholics.....	196
Its decrees.....	186	Affecting incident at Soleure.....	197
Religious liberty crushed.....	187	The war of Cappel.....	198
Riot and sacrilege.....	187	Points of resemblance.....	198
Proceedings of Bernese commissioners.....	188	An armed apostle.....	199
Downright tyranny.....	188	A prophet quailing before danger.....	199
The minister Farel.....	189	Battle of Cappel.....	200
His fiery zeal.....	189	Death of Zuingli.....	200
An appalling picture.....	189	Triumph of Catholic cantons.....	200
A parallel.....	190	Treaty of peace.....	200

CHAPTER VII.

REACTION OF CATHOLICITY AND DECLINE OF PROTESTANTISM, pp. 201-220.

Two parallel developments.....	202	Leading causes and practical results.....	212
The brave old ship.....	202	Decline of Protestantism.....	212
Modern Protestantism quite powerless.....	203	Apt comparison.....	213
A "thorough godly reformation" needed....	204	What stemmed the current?.....	213
Qualities for a reformer.....	204	Thread of Ariadne.....	214
The three days' battle.....	204	Divine Providence.....	214
The puzzle.....	205	Reaction of Catholicity.....	214
A thing doomed.....	205	Casaubon and Grotius.....	215
Which gained the victory?.....	206	Why they were not converted.....	216
The French revolution.....	206	Ancient and modern Puseyism.....	216
Ranké and Hallam.....	208	Justus Lipsius and Cassander.....	216
The rush of waters stayed.....	208	The inference.....	217
Persecution.....	209	Splendid passage of Macaulay.....	217
Protestant spice.....	209	Catholicity and enlightenment.....	219
The Council of Trent.....	210	The Church indestructible.....	219
Revival of piety.....	210	General gravitation to Rome.....	220
The Jesuits.....	211	The circle and its center.....	220

# **PART III.**

## **INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON RELIGION.**

### **CHAPTER VIII.**

#### **INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON DOCTRINAL BELIEF, pp. 221-244.**

The nature of Religion.....	221	Zuingle's inconsistency.....	232
A golden chain.....	221	Strange fanaticism.....	233
Question stated.....	222	Storck.....	233
Private judgment.....	223	Münzer.....	233
Church authority.....	223	Karlstadt, and John of Leyden.....	233
As many religions as heads.....	224	A new deluge.....	234
D'Aubigné's theory.....	224	Retorting the argument.....	236
Its poetic beauty.....	224	Discussion at the "Black Boar".....	237
Fever of logmachy.....	226	Luther and the cobbler.....	238
"Sons of liberty".....	227	Discussion at Marburg.....	239
The Bible dissected.....	227	Luther's avowal.....	240
A hydra-headed monster.....	228	Breaking necks.....	241
Erasmus.....	229	Melancthon's lament.....	241
"Curing a lame horse".....	229	The inference.....	241
Luther puzzled.....	229	Protestantism the mother of infidelity.....	242
His plaint.....	229	Picture of modern Protestantism in Ger-	
His inconsistency.....	230	many by Schlegel.....	244
Missions and miracles.....	231		

### **CHAPTER IX.**

#### **INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON MORALS, pp. 245-274.**

Two methods of investigation.....	245	Influence of Protestant doctrines.....	254
Connection of doctrine and morals.....	245	Shocking disorders.....	255
Salutary influence of Catholic doctrines.....	246	Testimony of Erasmus.....	255
Of confession.....	246	Bigamy and polygamy.....	256
Objections answered.....	246	Mohammedanism.....	257
Of celibacy.....	249	Practical results.....	257
Its manifold advantages.....	250	Testimonies of Luther, Bucer, Calvin, and	
Utility of the doctrines of satisfaction and		Melancthon.....	258
indulgences.....	250	The reformers testifying on their own work..	259
Of fasting.....	251	Döllinger's researches.....	260
Of prayers for the dead.....	252	Character of Erasmus.....	260
Of communion of saints.....	252	John Reuchlin.....	270
Sanctity of marriage.....	253	Present state of morals in Protestant coun-	
Divorces.....	253	tries.....	270

### **CHAPTER X.**

#### **THE INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON PUBLIC WORSHIP, pp. 274-287.**

General influence of the Reformation on		And tribute to Catholic worship.....	280
worship.....	274	A touching anecdote.....	281
Audin's picture of it.....	275	Continual prayer.....	281
Luther rebukes violence.....	275	Vandalism rebuked.....	282
But wavers.....	276	Grandeur of Catholic worship.....	282
Giving life to a skeleton.....	276	Churches always open.....	283
Taking a leap.....	277	Protestant worship.....	283
Mutilating the sacraments.....	277	The Sabbath day.....	284
New system of Judaism.....	278	Getting up a revival.....	285
Chasing away the mists.....	278	Protestant music and prayer.....	285
Protestant inconsistencies.....	278	The pew system.....	285
A dreary waste.....	279	The fashionable religion.....	286
No altars nor sacrifice.....	279	The two forms of worship compared.....	286
A land of mourning.....	279	St. Peter's church.....	286
Protestant plaints.....	280	The fine arts.....	287

# CONTENTS.

xi

## CHAPTER XI.

### INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON THE BIBLE, ON BIBLE READING, AND BIBLICAL STUDIES, pp. 288-314.

Protestant boastings.....	288	In Iceland.....	300
Theory of D'Aubigné.....	289	Syriac and Armenian versions.....	300
Luther finds a Bible.....	289	Summary and inference.....	300
How absurd!.....	290	Polyglots.....	301
The "chained Bible".....	290	Luther's false assertion.....	302
Maitland's triumphant refutation.....	290	Reading the Bible.....	303
Seckenorf versus D'Aubigné.....	292	Fourth rule of the index.....	304
Menzel's testimony.....	293	A religious vertigo remedied.....	304
The Catholic Church and the Bible.....	293	More harm than good.....	304
The Latin language.....	293	Present discipline.....	306
Vernacular versions before Luther's.....	295	A common slander.....	306
In Germany.....	295	Protestant versions.....	306
In Italy.....	297	Mutual compliments.....	307
In France.....	298	Version of King James.....	308
In Spain.....	298	The Douay and Vulgate Bibles.....	309
In England.....	299	Private interpretation.....	311
In Flanders.....	299	German rationalism.....	311
In Sclavonia.....	300	Its blasphemies.....	312
In Sweden.....	300	Rationalism in Geneva.....	314

## PART IV.

### INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON SOCIETY.

#### CHAPTER XII.

##### INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, pp. 315-344.

Stating the question.....	315	Zuingli.....	328
Two aspects.....	316	The drowned Jew.....	330
Professions.....	316	Calvinistic intolerance.....	330
D'Aubigné's theory.....	317	Persecution of Catholics.....	330
"Combating" <i>ad libitum</i> .....	318	Diet of Spire.....	331
Diversities and sects.....	320	Name of <i>Protestant</i> .....	332
Inconsistency.....	320	A stubborn truth.....	332
Early Protestant intolerance.....	321	Strange casuistry.....	333
The mother and her recreant daughter.....	322	Convention at Smalkalde.....	333
Facts on persecution of each other by early		Testimony of Menzel.....	339
Protestants.....	322	CUIUS REGIO, EJUS RELIGIO.....	339
Of Karlstadt.....	323	Union of church and state.....	340
Luther the cause of it.....	323	A bear's embrace.....	341
Persecution of Anabaptists.....	325	Hallam's testimony.....	342
Synod at Homburg.....	326	Parallel between Catholic and Protestant	
Luther's letter.....	327	countries.....	343

#### CHAPTER XIII.

##### INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON CIVIL LIBERTY, pp. 344-370.

Boasting.....	344	The war of the peasants.....	354
Theory of government.....	345	Two charges made good.....	354
Political liberty.....	345	Grievances of the peasants.....	355
Four things guaranteed.....	345	Drowned in blood.....	355
Pursuit of happiness.....	346	Remarkable testimony of Menzel.....	355
The Popes and liberty.....	347	Luther's agency therein.....	356
Rights of property.....	348	Halting between two extremes.....	356
Use made of confiscated church property...	349	Result.....	356
The Attila of the Reformation.....	350	Absolute despotism.....	361
Par nobile fratrum.....	350	Swiss cantons.....	362
Spoliation of Catholics.....	351	D'Aubigné puzzled.....	363
Contempt of testamentary dispositions.....	351	Liberty, a mountain nymph.....	364
The <i>jus manuale</i> abolished.....	352	The old mother of republics.....	364
And restored.....	353	Security to character.....	365
Disregard of life.....	353	Recapitulation.....	366
And crushing of popular liberty.....	354		

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE REFORMATION AT GENEVA, AND ITS INFLUENCE ON CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, pp. 370-392.

Character of Calvinism.....	370	Persecution.....	380
Protestant historians.....	370	Death of Gruet.....	380
The "Registers".....	371	Burning of Servetus.....	381
Audin.....	372	Hallam's testimony.....	386
Calvin's character.....	372	Morals of Calvin.....	388
His activity.....	373	His zeal.....	389
His heartlessness.....	373	His complicated diseases.....	389
Luther and Calvin compared.....	375	His last will.....	390
Early liberties of Geneva.....	376	His awful death and mysterious burial.....	390
The "Libertines".....	378	A douceur.....	391
Blue laws.....	379	The inference.....	392
Spy system.....	380		

## CHAPTER XV.

## INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON LITERATURE, pp. 393-428.

Light and darkness.....	393	Rothman and Omar.....	407
Boast of D'Aubigné.....	393	Disputations theology.....	407
Two sets of barbarians.....	394	Its practical results.....	408
Catholic and Protestant art.....	396	Morbid taste.....	409
The "painter of the Reformation".....	396	The Stagirite.....	410
Two witnesses against D'Aubigné.....	396	Mutual distrust.....	410
Schlegel.....	396	Case of Galileo.....	411
Hallam.....	396	Liberty of the press.....	413
"Bellowing in bad Latin".....	399	Old and new style.....	414
Testimony of Erasmus.....	400	Religious wars.....	414
Destruction of monasteries.....	401	Anecdote of Renschlin.....	415
Literary drought.....	402	Italy pre-eminent.....	416
Luther's plaint.....	402	Plaint of Leibnitz.....	417
Awful desolation.....	403	Revival of letters.....	417
An "iron padlock".....	403	A shallow sophism.....	418
Early Protestant schools.....	404	A parallel.....	418
D'Aubigné's omissions.....	404	Great inventions.....	420
Burning zeal.....	404	Literary ages.....	421
Light and flame.....	406	Protestant testimony.....	421
Zeal for ignorance.....	406	Döllinger's testimony of the reformers	
Burning of libraries.....	407	themselves.....	422

## CHAPTER XVI.

## INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON CIVILIZATION, pp. 428-449.

Definition.....	428	The Crusades.....	439
Religion, the basis.....	430	The Popes.....	439
Reclaiming from barbarism.....	430	Luther and the Turks.....	440
British East India possessions.....	431	Luther retracts.....	441
Catholic Missions—Sandwich Islands.....	434	Religious wars in Germany.....	443
Catholic and Protestant conquests.....	435	Thirty Years' War.....	443
The mother of civilization.....	435	General peace.....	446
The ark amid the deluge.....	435	Disturbed by the Reformation.....	447
Rome converts the nations.....	436	Comparison between Protestant and Catho-	
Early German civilization.....	438	lic countries.....	447
Mohammedanism.....	438	TRIBUNAL OF THE REFORMATION.....	452

## NOTES AND DOCUMENTS.

NOTE A.—AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE OPINIONS THAT THE FIRST REFORMERS HAVE GIVEN OF ONE ANOTHER, AND OF THE EFFECTS OF THEIR PREACHING.....	463
NOTE B.—LUTHER'S CONFERENCE WITH THE DEVIL.....	476
NOTE C.—PERMISSION GRANTED TO PHILIP, LANDGRAVE OF HESSE, BY LUTHER AND OTHER REFORMERS, TO HAVE TWO WIVES AT ONCE.....	482

# THE REFORMATION

## IN

### GERMANY AND SWITZERLAND.

---

#### VIEW OF EUROPE BEFORE THE REFORMATION.

---

**UTILITY** of this retrospective view—The origin of European Governments—The Northmen—Rome the Civilizer—Protestant testimony—The Pope and the Emperor—Charlemagne—Guelphs and Ghibellines—Temporal power of the Pope—Three great facts—Freedom of the Church—Election of Bishops—Catholic munificence in middle ages—The Truce of God—Question of Investitures—Horrible abuses—Gregory VII. and Henry IV.—The Controversy settled—But its germs remain—Modern historic justice—Growth of Mammonism—Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries—Boniface VIII. and Philip the Fair—Faction and heresy—The new Manicheans—The Flagellants—The Great Schism—The Papacy comes out of it unscathed—Catholic Reformation—Overcoming Scandals—The Hussites—Preponderance of Good over Evil—The Monasteries—Dr. Maitland's testimony—Dr. Robertson convicted of gross misrepresentations—Homily of St. Eligius—His warning against idolatry and superstition—A model mediæval Homily—St. Bernard and St. Vincent Ferrer—The Pragmatic Sanction—Its mischievous tendency—Letter of Pope Pius II.—Preparation for the Reformation—Revival of Learning—Art of Printing—Italy leads the way—Testimony of Macaulay—The Humanists and Dominicans—The Pope and Liberty—Testimony of Laing—Summing up—Four conclusions reached—What we propose to examine and prove.

THE rapidity with which the revolution, called by its friends *the Reformation*, succeeded throughout a considerable portion of Europe during the first half of the sixteenth century, can scarcely be properly appreciated, or even fully understood, without referring to the moral and religious condition of Europe during the preceding centuries. Hence we can not



probably furnish a more suitable introduction to our essays on the history of the Protestant Reformation in Germany, than by attempting to present to our readers a rapid retrospective view of European society during the period usually called the middle ages—extending from the fifth to the sixteenth century. Our survey must necessarily be very brief and summary, and we shall confine ourselves to those events, or groups of facts, which may appear to have had the greatest influence on the coming religious revolution. While most of our remarks will be general, many of the facts we shall have to allege will be specially connected with mediæval German history, and with the repeated and occasionally protracted struggles between the German emperors and the Popes. Without taking some such an historical retrospect, we will hardly be prepared to understand how the minds of Christians, especially in Germany, become so suddenly ripe for revolt against the time-honored authority of the old Church, and particularly against that of the sovereign pontiffs, to whom they were so greatly indebted.

The people who laid the foundations of almost all the modern European nations, and who shaped the great dynasties which have since resulted, after many vicissitudes, in the present settled—at least consolidated—governments of Europe, were mainly the descendants of the Northern hordes, who overran Europe in the fifth and following centuries. This is more particularly the case in regard to Germany, where the Northmen established, with but slight modifications, their own peculiar laws and customs. In France, Italy, and Spain, these peculiar Germanic customs were modified, to a greater or less extent, by pre-existing laws and usages; some of which were retained when the original population had become amalgamated with their conquerors.

The Northmen, who thus shaped the destiny of modern Europe, were originally either downright heathens—like the Huns—or else barbarians, with a slight tincture of Christianity in the form of the Arian heresy—like a portion of the

Goths and Vandals. . Little could certainly be expected from such men for the benefit of civilization. Their destiny seemed to be to destroy, not to build up. They annihilated the old pagan civilization, which, under the shadow of the victorious Roman eagles, had pervaded the greater portion of Europe;—could it be reasonably expected that they would be able to build up, amidst its desolate ruins, with which they had strewn and cumbered the European soil, a newer and better condition of society? They needed civilizing themselves;—how could they hope to be capable of civilizing others?

In the deplorable state of wide-spread desolation and social anarchy which overspread Europe for two or three centuries, in consequence of the successive barbarian invasions and the fall of the Roman empire in the West, nothing that was merely *human* could possibly have saved European society from utter and irretrievable ruin. All civilization seemed utterly hopeless, and simply impossible. No merely human philosophy or legislation could have brought order out of such chaos, light out of such darkness. An element possessing more than earthly power and energy was imperatively needed; and fortunately for humanity and civilization, this element was provided by the Church of Christ. The Church, and the Church alone, saved European society, and thereby rendered all subsequent civilization not only possible, but certain. The Church founded by the Man-God, built upon a rock, having her foundation cemented by His blood, and firmly secured from falling away by His infallible promises, was alone able to meet the emergency, and to assure the prosperous future of European society.

The fierce barbarians had conquered pagan Rome, and had made the environs of its splendid capital a dreary marble wilderness, strewn with broken columns and shattered cornices; but they could not conquer the Church, which had been established by the Son of the living God. On the contrary, the Church conquered them. The victorious Roman eagles now lay trailing in the dust, but the Cross—the noble

banner of the Church—was still erect and waving victoriously amidst the universal ruin and desolation. Nay, more; the Cross was carried in triumph from Christian Rome to the furthest fastnesses of the North, conquering the conquerors of pagan Rome, and thus becoming afterward their own cherished banner of victory. From the fifth to the twelfth century, an all-conquering and glorious, because bloodless and humanizing invasion, rolled from the South to the North, in compensation for the all-destroying invasion which had rolled from the North to the South. Thus Christian Rome nobly avenged the disasters which had overwhelmed the imperial city of the Cæsars: she repaid evil with good, and scattered unutterable blessings among those who had brought ruin to her hearth-stone, and her once pagan altars.

No fact of history is better attested, than that the Catholic Church, and the Catholic Church alone, Christianized, humanized, and civilized the various European nations, which now occupy the first place in civilization, and from which we in America are all descended. Intelligent and learned men of all shades of religious opinion have freely admitted this fact, without the acknowledgment of which, all modern history would, in truth, be wholly unintelligible, and would present a series of insolvable enigmas. This has been well understood and freely acknowledged by such men as Guizot, in France, Schlegel, Voigt, Hurter, Görres, Müller, Döllinger, and a host of others in Germany, Hallam, Roscoe, and Maitland, in England, and a multitude of other learned historians, who have laboriously investigated the subject of mediæval history, and have given to the world, during the last half century, the result of their researches. These researches have proved as important to the cause of historic truth, as they have been honorable to the Church, from whose brow no one can now tear the laurel wreath of victory over barbarism, which has been placed upon it by the willing hands of her enemies themselves. The deliberate verdict of modern history is, that the Catholic Church has been the mother of civilization, and

it cannot be set aside by either self-glorifying ignorance, or partisan prejudice.

The history of the Reformation in Germany, particularly, must be viewed in the light of this great fact. No portion of Europe, probably, owed a greater debt of gratitude to Rome, than Germany. It was Christian Rome which sent to her the missionary apostles, who, armed with commissions from the Popes, successively converted her people, and who subsequently labored with diligent and successful charity and zeal to soften their manners, to control their passions, to reform their legislation, and to raise them ultimately to that high degree of civilization to which they subsequently attained. The Germans were indebted to Rome, and chiefly to the Roman pontiffs, for all the principal elements of their civilization, and for all that constituted their greatness as a people.

How all this was lost sight of, or forgotten, at the period of the Reformation, and how the benefits of Rome were repaid with insults and injury, we shall see in the sequel. Our present purpose requires us to dwell more particularly on the manner in which the Church grew up and flourished, in vigor and holiness, throughout Germany and other European countries, and on the origin and history of the frequent conflicts which arose at different periods of the middle ages, between the Roman pontiffs and the different princes of Europe, particularly the German emperors.

The relations between the Popes and the German emperors were, from an early period, manifold and intimate. The latter had been indebted to the former, not only for their title, but for the much more extended powers with which this was accompanied. In solemnly crowning Charlemagne emperor of the Romans, in St. Peter's church, on Christmas day, A. D. 800, Pope Leo III. had laid the foundations of the new Christian empire in the West, which was to take the place of the old pagan empire that had fallen. The very title of the newly-created, or newly-confirmed dynasty implied—what the facts of mediæval history more fully establish—that the Roman

pontiffs constituted an integral, if not an essential element of the new civil organization. It belonged to them not only to crown the new emperor, but to recognize and pass judgment upon his claim to the throne, whenever there were several rival aspirants for the honor. Their advice was sought, and their judgment invoked, in almost every great political emergency, often by the emperors themselves, more frequently still by the people, whom the tyranny of the latter aggrieved or oppressed. Theirs was, in fact, the only voice which could make itself heard amidst the clamor of factions and the turmoil of society, so common throughout the middle ages—a stormy period of transition, in which Europe was preparing for the more consolidated and stable forms which her governments have since assumed.

The original empire of Charlemagne embraced Germany, France, and a great portion of Europe. It was colossal in its proportions, and it was administered with rare vigor, genius, and ability, by its great founder. But genius is not hereditary, and his vast empire was divided, after his death, among his children and successors, who possessed but a small share of his eminent qualities, either of head or of heart. The French kings henceforth vied with the German emperors in their aspirations to control the fortunes of continental Europe. But the emperors claimed a commanding influence over Italy, which they have retained, with some exceptions and vicissitudes, almost down to the present day.\* This claim, and the disastrous consequences to Italy, which often resulted from its exaggerated or undue exercise, constituted the fruitful source

---

\* The recent war in Italy was undertaken under the pretense of securing Italian freedom, by diminishing the influence of Austria in the peninsula. The sequel has, however, proved that a much deeper game was intended to be played by "the Sphinx of the Tuilleries"—Napoleon III. The robbery of the Church and the spoliation of the Pope seem to have been the ultimate objects contemplated, under the specious pretext of Italian independence. Though the policy is not yet fully worked out, these appear, from the facts, to have been its leading elements from the very commencement of the war. May the events of the future fail to fulfill the indications of the present! How often has the name of *liberty* been abused in the world's history!

of most of the contests between them and the Popes, who were the oldest as well as the best of the Italian sovereigns, and, as such, naturally felt a lively interest in all that concerned the welfare of Italy. The Italians, oppressed and down-trodden by the German emperors, instinctively turned their eyes to the Roman pontiffs, and implored their powerful succor against the overwhelming forces brought against them by the imperial invaders of their independence and rights. They had no other resource left to them in their helplessness; and their earnest appeals were seldom made in vain.

The Popes were themselves comparatively weak and powerless, as temporal sovereigns, but they were strong in the armor of God. When moral suasion failed, they hesitated not to hurl the thunder-bolt of excommunication at the head of the imperial tyrant who dared trample on the sacred rights of his people. The Lombard League of the twelfth century, in which the Italian cities of the North banded together to oppose the encroachments of the imperial tyrant Frederic Barbarossa, furnishes one out of many striking illustrations of this remark. Pope Alexander III. was unanimously chosen as the head of this famous League, which, under his auspices, succeeded in expelling the tyrant, and establishing, for a time at least, Italian independence. The free cities and the republics of Northern and Central Italy grew up and flourished under the influence of this triumph of patriotism over foreign invasion, of Italian freedom over German despotism; and the liberated and grateful Italians named their newly-founded city of *Alexandria*, after the illustrious and successful champion of their rights; while the imperial tyrant was induced to expiate his cruelties by taking the cross, and marching as a crusader to the holy land.

But though foiled in this attempt to crush Italian independence, the German emperors did not give up their claim to be the rulers—at least the arbiters—of Italy. They established and maintained for centuries in this beautiful country a powerful party, wholly attached to their interests. The

Ghibellines were imperialists, while the opposing party of the Guelphs were the advocates of Italian liberty. The struggles of these two parties for the ascendancy was the fruitful source of troubles and of bloody civil feuds during all the latter half of the middle ages. These fratricidal strifes kept alive the flames of civil war, and deluged with blood the streets of the Italian cities, from the middle of the thirteenth to the middle of the fifteenth century. The overshadowing influence and the rich patronage of the German emperors, who lavished their wealth on the Ghibelline faction, kept alive this detestable party, and rendered its powerful members most dangerous elements of Italian society. It is almost needless to say, that the Popes, while endeavoring to soothe the angry passions of both parties, generally took sides with the Guelphs, and that they did every thing in their power to heal the bloody feuds which were so very disastrous to Italian interests. But their efforts were not always successful, and they themselves were compelled frequently to bend to the storm, and to feel in their own persons its desolating influence. They were sometimes driven from Rome by the triumphant imperialists; and one cause of their long sojourn at Avignon was precisely this, that in consequence of the fearful condition to which Central and Northern Italy had been reduced by these truculent factions, Rome had become almost wholly uninhabitable.

Whatever opinion may be entertained in reference to the origin and merits of the various successive contests which were carried on between the German emperors, and occasionally the French kings, on the one side, and the Roman pontiffs on the other, and particularly in regard to the origin and grounds of the claim to temporal power set up by several of the pontiffs during the period in question, we think that no impartial man, who is well versed in the history of those times, will be disposed to deny any one of the three following propositions—each one of which could be substantiated by a volume of evidence:



1. That the Popes were drawn into the vortex of temporal affairs and political agitation by the train of circumstances—already alluded to—which originated European society, and which rendered it an imperative necessity that they should interpose, if they would arrest anarchy and seek to save society from utter ruin.

2. That when thus drawn into the vortex, their influence was generally highly beneficial to society, by being thrown on the side of virtue struggling against vice, and of popular freedom battling against imperial or royal despotism.

And, 3. That to their interposition mainly do we owe it, that the Church was enabled to preserve, to a great extent, her own independence and freedom of action, and was thus in a position to continue successfully her heavenly mission for humanizing and civilizing European society; which without this influence would most certainly have relapsed into barbarism—even if it had ever been able to emerge from barbarism.

No other power than that of the Catholic Church, wielded by its chief executive—the Roman pontiffs—could ever have checked lawless and overwhelming tyranny, could ever have effectually shielded popular rights from oppression, could ever have successfully defended female chastity from imperial and royal licentiousness, by fully guarantying to all the sacred rights, and by defending the duties, of Christian marriage; could ever, in one word, have arrested the torrent of mere brute force, which was sweeping over Europe and threatening it with destruction.

Amidst the din of arms and the clamor of the passions, no other voice could be heard than that which came from Rome; and even this voice was not always heeded by those, whose headlong passions so blinded them to the promptings of faith as to render them not unfrequently deaf to its eloquent expostulations or terrible menaces. If the middle ages were pre-eminently ages of faith, they were none the less ages of violence and of brute force. But wo to European civilization, if there had not existed at the time a great moral and



religious power, which was alone respected by the masses of the population; and which, if not always heeded in its warning, by those against whom its exercise was invoked, still made itself generally heard and respected. If right finally triumphed over might, and the passions had to yield at length in the struggle against reason and religion, we owe the result mainly to the beneficial influence of the Papacy. This is as certain as any thing else in all history.

This leads us to another department of the struggles between the Popes and the temporal princes of Europe, which is more nearly connected with our present purpose, and upon which we shall be pardoned for dwelling at somewhat greater length. We refer to the efforts of the Popes to secure freedom to the Church against the aggressions of the temporal power, to the various phases of their contests with emperors and kings for the attainment of this vital object, and to the final results of this great struggle, as developed on the eve of the Reformation itself.

The chief element of this important controversy between the spiritual and temporal power was this: that the German emperors and some other feudal sovereigns of Europe, often sought to enslave the Church, by making her higher clergy wholly dependent upon themselves; and that the Popes, on the contrary, sought to insure to the clergy freedom of election and freedom of action. In regard to the principle involved, the Popes were manifestly in the right throughout the whole contest, while the claim set up by the temporal sovereigns was clearly an usurpation, as unfounded in reason, as it was mischievous in fact.

The Church had clearly the right to appoint her own bishops and clergy, and to exercise over them such a supervision and control, as would render them fully responsible for their conduct to her own regularly constituted tribunals. She could not exercise this undoubted right, nor hold her own ministers to their proper responsibility, if the temporal sovereigns had, at the same time, a right to thrust on her such

spiritual officers as she disapproved of, and could not control. How could she properly guard the flock committed to her charge, if others, beyond her control, were permitted to thrust into its inclosure, as shepherds, "devouring wolves in sheep's clothing." The very idea of the Church, together with the primary objects for which the Church was established by Christ, necessarily carries with it the logical inference, that she should be free and independent of the temporal power in her own peculiar sphere of action, and especially in the appointment and control of her own officers or ministers. Without this freedom of action, she would be hampered at every step, and she would be rendered totally incapable of discharging her high mission for the conversion of the world, and the salvation of mankind.

Accordingly, we find that, from the very beginning of the Church, this liberty was not only claimed, but openly exercised, even in the midst of the most violent persecution from pagan, and of occasional opposition from Christian emperors. The canons enacted in various early and mediæval councils, and approved by the Popes, fully provided for the mode to be adopted in the election of bishops and abbots, as well as the rules to be followed in the appointment of pastors of souls, and of other inferior ministers. The discipline varied somewhat at different times, and in different countries; but everywhere and at all times the freedom of the Church in the election or appointment of her ministers was strongly claimed and triumphantly vindicated, though not without occasional violent opposition from the temporal power.

During the middle ages, the usual method of election for bishops and abbots, was that in which the cathedral and monastic chapters, composed of the higher clergy of the diocese, or the most distinguished among the monks, freely convened and freely selected the candidate whom they deemed best qualified for the vacant place. The Metropolitans, or Archbishops, were authorized to exercise a general supervision over the proceedings, while the power of confirming or rejecting the

successful candidate rested with the sovereign pontiff, who, if he approved the choice, issued the necessary commission or bulls for the installment into office of the new incumbent. This was clearly as it should be; and had this undoubted right of the Church been left untrammelled and unviolated, many scandals would have been prevented, and much evil avoided.

The better to understand the motives or pretexts sometimes alleged by the temporal sovereigns of Europe, during the middle ages, for their claim to appoint men of their own choice to the important offices of bishops and abbots, we must go back to the period which immediately followed the occupation of Europe by the Northmen—the fifth and following centuries. The various barbarous chieftains who parceled out Europe among their followers, were in general rude, but generous men. On their conversion to Christianity, their hearts, and those of their successors, swelled with gratitude toward the Church, which had called them from darkness to the light of the faith; and their gratitude was fruitful in good works. They munificently endowed the bishoprics, and subsequently the monasteries; they allotted to them large and rich domains; they erected palaces and castles for the bishops, and extensive cloisters for the monks of St. Benedict, and for other religious orders which sprang up at a later period.

They did more. Their generosity toward their spiritual benefactors seemed exhaustless, and its spirit was communicated by their example and exhortation to the entire mass of the population. All classes vied with one another in munificence toward the Church and toward her ministers. Splendid churches, spacious hospitals, and palatial colleges and universities sprang up all over Europe. Many of these noble edifices still remain, and they are, even at this day, the admiration of the world, which with all its boasted progress could scarcely produce any thing to equal, certainly nothing to surpass them in grandeur. In those lands over which the storm of the Reformation has swept, many of those splendid struc-

tures now lie in silent and solemn, but still imposing ruins, while others have been sadly diverted from their original destination, and have become the palaces of worldly pride and pomp, instead of asylums for the poor of Christ.

The Church of the middle ages more than repaid all this munificent bounty of her children. In return, she bestowed upon them her abundant spiritual treasures, and her rich and glorious civilization. Her cathedrals, monasteries, and colleges were oases in the mediæval desert, inviting all to be refreshed by their perennial verdure, and to slake their thirst at the cooling fountains of religion and learning, which were there constantly flowing. To the oppressed vassal, fleeing from the anger of his all-powerful lord, she opened her peaceful sanctuary, where he was safe until the wrath of his ruthless persecutor could be mollified by time, or appeased by her own mercy-breathing voice of expostulation. To the heart-sick, and to those weary of the world's turmoil, and panting for something higher and more stable, she opened her holy cloisters, devoted to study and prayer; in the sanctuary solitude of which they might find rest and peace, might soar on the wings of heavenly contemplation to the throne of God, and might find time to pray, to read, and to labor for the enlightenment and salvation of others less favored. To the foot-sore traveler, those monasteries were ever open inns for refreshment, where he was sure to meet a cordial welcome, and to receive, free of charge, and for the love of God, all the sweet offices of Christian hospitality; while the neighboring poor might always confidently reckon on them, freely and bountifully to supply all their pressing wants.

To the sick and the afflicted, of every class and condition, the Catholic hospitals and asylums of the middle ages were easily accessible, and therein they might be sure to find every comfort which munificent charity could provide, to solace them in their bodily afflictions or mental sorrows.

Finally—for we should never terminate were we to enumerate all the benefits bestowed on society by the Church of the

middle ages—what was so beautifully called, the **TRUCE OF GOD**, which the Church proclaimed, accomplished more than perhaps any other single influence toward humanizing the European populations, by diminishing the frequency and mitigating the horrors of those petty civil wars which were so characteristic of the period in question. When, for the love of God, and out of reverence for the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, men, at the call of the Church, generally agreed to suspend all warfare during four days in each week—from Wednesday evening until the ensuing Monday morning, we might naturally expect to find their passions cooling down, and charity with a spirit of conciliation and forgiveness, taking the place of vengeance and bloody civil feuds. And such, in effect, was the practical working of the Truce of God on European society.

Happy would it have been for Europe and the world, had this merciful and conciliatory spirit of the Church been properly met and duly appreciated by the princes of the earth. The earth would have become a sort of elysium, and the development of a sound Christian civilization would have been hastened by whole centuries. But unhappily, this was not always the case. So it is in all things human, where evil is generally found mixed with good, the tares with the good wheat. In return for their munificence toward the Church, the temporal princes not unfrequently claimed what the Church could not bestow, without surrendering her independence, and virtually resigning her divine commission to rebuke vice in high places, and freely to teach the world unto salvation.

The feudal system had been introduced into Europe by the Northmen, and in her external relations with society the Church was necessarily brought, more or less, under its influence. The bishops and abbots, in virtue of the domains held by them, became feudal lords, who, like others similarly situated, were expected to do homage to their liege lords, or *suzerains*, for their own territory; and though not compelled, or even expected, actually to engage in warfare themselves,

they were held bound, on the call of their liege lord, to marshal their retainers under his standard, to espouse his quarrel and fight his battles. This incidental connection of the Church with the State, while it undoubtedly tended to moderate the fierceness of strife and to humanize the hearts of the people, by bringing the influence of the Church to bear directly on the turmoil of the camp and the bloody scenes of the battle field, was, at the same time, fruitful with danger to the spirit of the higher clergy. While thus descending into the arena of busy or fierce human passions, though they might hope to moderate strife and to prevent or diminish bloodshed, they were exposed to the peril of worldly-mindedness and to the consequent diminution or loss of the spiritual character so essential to their vocation and usefulness. This was the chief danger of the connection; its benefits to society we have already summarily indicated.

In proportion as the higher clergy became wealthy and influential, the great feudal lords, and especially the emperors of Germany, sought by every means in their power to win them over to their interests, and to make them subservient to their worldly purposes. And as they could not hope fully to control the action of those bishops and abbots, who were worthy of their high positions by being thoroughly imbued with the ecclesiastical spirit, they sought to thrust their own creatures into the principal vacant sees and abbeys. The chief merit of the candidate, in their eyes, was his courtly subserviency. In carrying out this wicked scheme for enslaving the Church, and virtually ruining it by foisting into its high places unworthy ministers, they encountered frequent and sturdy opposition from the bishops and abbots; but whether these resisted the usurpation or not, the Popes were sure to stand forth on such occasions as the uncompromising champions of the freedom and purity of election, and of the independence of the Church. From this source sprang many, if not most of the protracted struggles between the Popes and the German emperors during the middle ages.

A prominent phase of this contest is exhibited in the controversy concerning what were called *Investitures*. By superficial or prejudiced writers this controversy has been regarded merely as a puerile dispute about petty rites and ceremonies, while the claims of the Popes have been represented by the same class of writers as an usurpation on the rights of the emperors. By those, on the contrary, who have penetrated beyond the surface of history, and have carefully studied the facts as interpreted by the spirit of the times, it has been justly looked upon as the vital question of the age—a question of liberty or slavery, of life or death for the Church. Having founded and endowed the bishoprics and abbeys, the emperors claimed the right, not only of inducting into office and duly *investing* with its insignia the candidate who had been regularly and canonically elected by the episcopal or monastic Chapter, but, occasionally at least, of setting aside the election itself or reducing it to a mere lifeless form and a real mockery. This was clearly an usurpation on the time-honored and undoubted right of the Church freely to choose her own ministers. Its practical effect was, to thrust into the high places of the Church unworthy men—mere creatures and parasites of the court, and thereby to entail a permanent scandal on Christendom.

So far, in fact, was this pretension carried, that some of the German emperors claimed the right of *investing* the new incumbent with ring and crozier, the ordinary emblems of spiritual jurisdiction; thereby giving to understand that the emperor was the fountain, not only of temporal, but of spiritual power! The evil seems to have reached its culminating point in the eleventh century, under the impious and debauched Henry IV. of Germany, with whom Pope St. Gregory VII. carried on his memorable struggle for the freedom and rights of the Church. This wicked emperor, appropriately called by his contemporaries the Nero of the middle ages, and who probably has no parallel in Christian history except his namesake Henry VIII. of England, seems



to have been the first who brought the controversy on Investitures to a crisis. The abuses to which his usurpation gave rise were truly horrible. Had not the stern resolve and iron nerve of his papal competitor checked them in time, the Church in Germany would, in all human probability, have been rendered utterly desolate and been brought to the very verge of ruin. Even as it was, the picture drawn of its moral condition by contemporary writers is frightful to contemplate. As the matter is so vital in its importance, we will be pardoned for alleging a few passages from these writers. Says Matthew of Tyre:

"A custom had long prevailed, especially in the empire (German), that on the decease of the prelates of the Church, the ring and pastoral crozier were sent to the lord emperor. Afterwards the emperor, selecting one of his own familiars or chaplains, and *investing* him with the insignia, sent him to the vacant church, without waiting for the election by the clergy."\*

Ebbo, another contemporary, who lived in the very palace of Henry IV. employs similar language:

"At this time the Church had not a free election; but whenever any one of the bishops had entered upon the way of all flesh, immediately the captains of that city transmitted to the palace his ring and pastoral staff; and thus the king or emperor, after consulting his council, selected a suitable pastor for the widowed flock."†

How far the persons thus selected were suitable, the event

\* Inoleverat consuetudo, præsertim in imperio, quod defungentibus Ecclesiæ prælatis annulus et virga pastoralis ad dominum imperatorem dirigebantur. Unde postmodum unum quemdam de familiaribus et capellanis suis investiens ad ecclesiam vacantem dirigebat, ut ibi pastoris fungeretur officio, non expectata cleri electione. (Sacri Belli Historia, lib. 1. c. 18. Apud Palma, Prælectiones Hist. Eccles., II. 138, Edit. Rome, 1848.)

† Hoc tempore Ecclesia liberam electionem non habebat; sed cum quilibet antistes viam universæ carnis ingressus fuisset, mox Capitanei civitatis illius annulum et virgam pastorem ad palatium trans mittebant, sicque regia auctoritas, communicato cum aulicis consilio, orbatæ plebi idoneum constituerebat pastorem (In vita Othonis Bamberg. Episcopi, I. 1-8 and 9. Apud Palma, Ibid.)



unfortunately proved but too well. The men who were thus thrust into the vacant sees were, almost without exception, the mere subservient and unscrupulous creatures of the imperial tyrant, ready, on all occasions to flatter his vices, and to do his bidding. Under the operation of this iniquitous system, simony became prevalent throughout Germany and Northern Italy, wherever, in fact, the imperial influence extended. Bishoprics and benefices of all kinds were unblushingly bought and sold at the imperial court. The emperor often kept the sees long vacant, that he might seize on their revenues, which he squandered in shameless debauchery. The delay also had the effect of eliciting higher bids from the hungry aspirants, who hung about the court, and it thereby contributed still further to replenish the imperial coffers.

This enormous evil could not be long endured by the Church. St. Peter Damian and other holy prelates of Italy and Germany, inveighed against it with their burning eloquence; and Pope St. Gregory VII., after frequent but vain expostulations with the imperial monster, drew forth from the armory of the Church the thunder-bolt of excommunication, and fearlessly hurled it at his guilty head. He, the dauntless "Hercules of the middle ages," was not the man to quail before tyranny seated in high places, though the latter was armed with sufficient physical power to crush him at once to the earth. Let us again hear Matthew of Tyre, in reference to the bold attitude of the pontiff:

"Considering that this conduct was opposed to all justice, and that by it all ecclesiastical rights were trampled under foot, he admonished the same emperor once and again, even to the third time, that he would desist from so detestable a presumption; and when, after having thus sought to warn him with salutary counsel, he could not recall him to the path of duty, he bound him in the bonds of an excommunication."\*

---

\* *Contra omnem fieri honestatem considerans, et jura in eo facto conculcari ecclesiastica perpendens, semel et tertio eundem imperatorem commonuit ut a tam detestabili desisteret præsumptione, quem præceptis salutaribus commonitum, cum revocare non posset, vinculo anathematis innodavit. Ibid.*

The intrepid pontiff did not stop with the mere excommunication of the emperor: he fulminated the sentence of deprivation against all bishops and abbots who would dare receive their office "from the hands of a layman;" and he further declared that "such an intruder should by no means be reckoned among bishops and abbots, and that no audience should be granted to him in the capacity of bishop or abbot." "Moreover," he added, "we interdict to him the grace of St. Peter, and the entrance into the Church, until such time as he will freely resign the place, which, through ambition and disobedience—which is the crime of idolatry—he has usurped. . . . Moreover, if any one of the emperors, dukes, marquisses, or counts shall presume to grant Investiture of a bishopric or any other ecclesiastical dignity, let him know that he is bound under the same bonds of excommunication."\*

This sentence was confirmed in the fifth and seventh of the Roman councils held under Gregory VII., and likewise in the Council of Benevento, held in 1087. In the great Council of Clermont, convened by Pope Urban II. in 1096, to organize the first crusade, it was again confirmed, and solemnly promulgated to all Christendom.

It is true, that while greatly harassed and under duress, Pope Paschal II. allowed to Henry V., the successor of Henry IV., the privilege of investing the new incumbent with ring and crozier, provided full liberty of election had been previously secured, and all abuses eliminated; but this indulgence was greatly abused by the emperor, who took occasion from it to thrust his own creatures into the vacant sees;

---

\* *Insuper ei gratiam Sancti Petri et introitum ecclesiæ interdicimus, quoad usque locum quem sub crimine tam ambitionis quam inobedientiæ quod est scelus idolatriæ coepit, deseruerit. . . . Item si quis Imperatorum, Ducum, Marchionum, Comitum Investituram episcopatus vel alicujus Ecclesiæ dignitatis dare præsumpserit, ejusdem sententiæ vinculo se adstrictum sciat.* (Hugo, *Laviniacensis Abbas*, in *Chronico Verdun.* apud *Novam Biblioth. Labboei*, Tom. I. Cf. *Palma*, *ibid.*)

and in consequence, Paschal revoked his decree in two councils, held in the years 1112 and 1116. The whole controversy was finally settled in 1122, in the Council of Worms, in which Pope Calixtus II. and the Emperor Henry V. entered into a solemn compact or *Concordat*—probably the first Concordat of ecclesiastical history—in which the emperor wholly gave up the claim of investing with ring and crozier, and promised to guaranty full liberty of election, and also to make restitution of the church revenues, which had been usurped; and on the other side, the pontiff permitted the election to take place in the presence of the emperor, but “without simony or any violence;” with the further stipulation, “that if any discord should arise among the parties, the emperor should give his assent and aid to the sounder party, in accordance with the counsel and judgment of the metropolitan and the provincial bishops; and the person so chosen should be invested with the regalia by the *sceptre*.”\*

The controversy was thus indeed settled, but its roots were not wholly removed. These continued to send forth their noxious shoots during the following centuries, down to the period of the Reformation. The oft-reiterated claim of the temporal sovereigns, to interfere, to a greater or less extent, with the election to the bishoprics and higher benefices, and their too-often successful attempts to thrust unworthy men into the high places of the Church, was the monster evil of the middle ages. It was the fruitful source of grievous scandals and abuses.—How could it be otherwise? How could the

---

\* Absque simonia et aliqua violentia, ut si qua discordia inter partes emer-  
serit, metropolitani et provincialium consilio et iudicio saniori parti assensum  
et auxilium præbeas. Electus autem Regalia per sceptrum a te recipiat,  
etc. Apud Palma, *ibid.* p. 139–40.

By the *Regalia* were understood the feudal rights of lordship acquired by being properly inducted into possession of the domain by the liege lord. The only suitable way of doing this was considered to be that in which the sceptre was employed, and not the crozier and ring, the emblems of spiritual authority.

Church be free from scandals, when, in spite of all her exertions and protests, in spite of the repeated denunciations uttered by her Popes and her councils, bad men were thus violently or by covert intrigue, thrust upon her, to administer whole dioceses or provinces of her spiritual domain? The only wonder is, that the evil was not even greater and more wide-spread; and we owe it to the zeal and energy of the Popes that it was not so. If the Church was saved from utter ruin, it was, humanly-speaking, mainly by and through such men as St. Gregory VII., the Alexanders, and the Innocents, who, from the chair of Peter feared not boldly to hurl their anathemas at the heads of the ruthless tyrants, who sought for their own vile purposes, to degrade and enslave her ministers. It was in this noble cause of the independence of the Church against the dangerous encroachments of the State, that the lives of many among these men of God, who loved God and feared not the face of kings, were spent and worn away. This was the true secret of many of their protracted struggles with the German emperors. As the candid Protestant biographer of St. Gregory VII.—Voight—freely admits, “the Holy See was the only tribunal which could set any limits to imperial despotism, as a second defender of humanity.”\* This is, in fact, the key to many portions of mediæval history, without which the secrets of its real spirit cannot be unlocked, nor its leading facts be properly understood or fully appreciated.

The controversy on Investitures was a contest between moral principle and brute force,—between reason and passion,—between morals and licentiousness,—between religion and incipient infidelity. Though sometimes seemingly overcome by the fierce storms raised against them, the Popes were really the conquerors in the end, even in the midst of their apparent defeat. Gregory VII. was driven from Rome by the forces of Henry IV., and he died an exile at Salerno, in Southern Italy; but the victory of principle and virtue had been

---

\* Hist. Greg. VII., II. 98; Abbe Jager's translation.

already won, his noble soul was wholly unsubdued, and on his tomb might have been inscribed the epitaph which subsequently marked that of the heroic general of the Knights of Rhodes: *FORTUNÆ VIOTRIX VIRTUS—VIRTUE THE CONQUEROR OF FORTUNE*. He bequeathed to his age and to his successors in the Papacy a legacy of countless price, in the noble principle which had moulded his whole character and governed all his actions: that “it is better to be *right*, than to gain the whole world.” Gregory embodied this principle in the following passage contained in one of his epistles, which deserves to be written in letters of gold: “I would rather undergo death for your salvation, than obtain the whole world to your spiritual ruin. For I fear God, and therefore value but little the pride and pleasures of the world.”\*

Now mark the justice of modern history. In any event or emergency, the Popes are sure to be blamed. If they oppose a German emperor, it is nothing but ambition which prompts their action. If they strive earnestly against the intrusion into episcopal sees of unworthy men, it is all through sinister motives, and that they may extend the circle of their own power. If the men thus intruded, in spite of their sternest opposition, should give public scandal, still the Church and the Popes are in the wrong.—Why did not the Popes prevent it? Why did they allow scandals so enormous in the high places of the Church? In all these struggles, the Pope would seem to be never right, and the emperor never wrong; or if the case be so glaring that no sophistry can resist or even dim the evidence, then the Pope is condemned with faint praise, and the emperor is absolved with faint censure. Such is, in general, the spirit, and such the fairness of what, in modern times, is called *history*. There are some honorable exceptions, indeed, but they rather confirm than weaken the rule. A few Protestant historians have the boldness to tell the truth without extenuation or

---

\* Epistolæ, VI. l. Apud Voigt, ut sup.

partiality, while a far greater number tell it, if at all, timidly and by halves, mixing up much chaff of misrepresentation with a few grains of truth.

Roscoe may be said, perhaps, to belong rather to the former than to the latter class. He admits, what every one at all acquainted with history knows to be the fact, that "the Popes may, in general, be considered as superior to the age in which they lived."\* An American Protestant writer bears the following honorable testimony to the civilizing influence of the Church in the middle ages.†

"Though seemingly enslaved, the Church was in reality the life of Europe. She was the refuge of the distressed, the friend of the slave, the helper of the injured, the only hope of learning. To her, chivalry owed its noble aspirations; to her, art and agriculture looked for every improvement. The ruler from her learned some rude justice; the ruled learned faith and obedience. Let us not cling to the superstition, which teaches that the Church has always upheld the cause of tyrants. Through the middle ages she was the only friend and advocate of the people, and of the rights of man. To her influence was it owing that, through all that strange era, the slaves of Europe were better protected by law than are now the free blacks of the United States by the national statutes."

As time rolled on, and European society was gradually moulded into form and became consolidated, the dangers which threatened the Church, instead of diminishing, seemed rather to increase. In proportion as men became richer and more attached to the world, the brightness of the faith was dimmed in their hearts, and the temporal gained the ascendant over the eternal. What chiefly distinguished the earlier portion of the middle ages, down to the close of the Crusades at the end of the thirteenth century, was the embodiment into the minds, hearts, and actions of the people, of the great truth, that the interests of eternity are paramount, and that those of time are as nothing in comparison therewith. That was the golden age of chivalry and the crusades, of noble

---

\* Life of Leo X., L. 53., quoted by Fredet. Modern History.

† In the North American Review for July, 1845.

impulses and disinterested deeds. It was followed by the age of mammonism, in which money and what money can procure were so highly prized as often to be preferred to all things else. And this spirit has gone on steadily increasing, even unto the present *enlightened* age. Beginning with the fourteenth century, we may trace its gradual development in each successive age down to our own, in which material interests threaten to absorb all others, and to swallow up every thing heavenly.

A brilliant writer in the Dublin Review thinks that, in certain respects, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were pre-eminently the ages of darkness. He says:

"Of course, if darkness is synonymous with ignorance, the ninth and tenth may fairly lay claim to the title; but if we take into the account what may be called the moral effects of darkness, namely confusion, perplexity, and dismay, the two centuries which immediately preceded the Reformation may well rival, if not outdo their predecessors. The night of the tenth century was one which came in its right place, and gave promise of the dawn. But the epoch of which we speak was an eclipse, a very Egyptian darkness, worse than Chaos or Erebus, black as the thick preternatural night under cover of which our Lord was crucified. All at once, when the mediæval glory of the Church was at its zenith, a century opens with the audacious seizure of Boniface VIII. at Anagni, and closes with the great Schism. . . . .

"Evidently the middle ages are gone or going. Cathedrals were still built, and Gregorian chants were sung. We are now in the very zenith of Gothic architecture and of Gothic music, but the real glory of mediæval times is gone. That which constituted their real characteristic, that which separates them off from modern times was not the outward form, but the inward spirit. Every breast in that rude feudal hierarchy, from the king and noble down to the franklin and the serf, was animated with the persuasion that the Kingdom of Christ was supreme over every thing earthly. This was the public opinion of the time, the spirit of the age. But it was fast passing away, and the Church had now to rule as best she might over disaffected and disloyal subjects, who watched her every step with jealousy and distrust. . . . .

"Can any thing further be needed to prove that the fourteenth century was a time of fearful unsettlement? The old landmarks were being removed. Poor humanity was losing its simple faith in the eternal lights



which had hitherto guided it for many hundred years. It had embarked on a wide, illimitable ocean, and was beating about with an infinite void before it, and no star to guide its way.”\*

In all this there is, no doubt, considerable rhetorical flourish and no little exaggeration, but there is, withal, much of historic truth. It is certain, that the spirit of the Catholic middle ages underwent a great and most important change in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; that this period of transition was attended with much unsettledness of the popular mind, and with many storms of popular passion; and that the result of all this ferment was to pave the way for the event called the *Reformation*;—which, in fact, was not a reformation but a revolution. This was truly “a strange period and fruitful in storms;” “an unfortunate period, when a spirit of boldness and violence agitated all classes of society, and produced in every direction sanguinary disorders.”† We may apply to it, in a qualified sense, what the Roman historian says of a certain disastrous period of Roman history: “It was fertile in vicissitudes, atrocious in wars, discordant in seditions, fierce even in peace.”‡

The Roman pontiffs had now to contend, not with the German emperors alone, but also with the French kings. Young, ardent, and ambitious, Philip the Fair of France, a grandson of St. Louis, but totally unlike his sainted ancestor, could not brook the just rebuke of his vices and tyranny administered by the determined pontiff, Boniface VIII.; who, true to the traditions of the Papacy, had sought in vain to mediate between him and the kings of England and Aragon, with whom he was at war; and who had also justly reprimanded

---

\* Dublin Review for March, 1858, Article,—The German Mystics of the Fourteenth Century,—a very remarkable production, brilliant and picturesque, but somewhat exaggerated.

† The Reformers before the Reformation, by Emile de Bonnechese, 1 vol. 8vo., Harpers, 1844, p. 37.

‡ Opimum casibus, atrox proeliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace ævum. Tacitus, Lib. I., c. 2.



manded him for debasing the currency of France, and for overburdening his people and oppressing the Church with exorbitant taxation. The fiery monarch sent his emissaries to Anagni, where the Pope was then residing; and these, true to the spirit, if not to the letter of their instructions, heaped insults and outrages on the head of the venerable Boniface, and one of them, it is said, went so far as to add blows to insults. The aged pontiff, venerable no less for his learning and ability than for his virtues, sank under the cruel treatment thus inflicted on virtue by brute force, and he died soon afterward.\* His sainted successor, the blessed Benedict XI., while preparing a bull of excommunication against the royal assassin, perished himself, probably from the effects of poison.† His second successor, Clement V., was a Frenchman, and he took up his abode at Avignon, in France; where he and his successors remained for about seventy years—until 1378.

Meantime, while the Popes resided at Avignon, Italy was in a ferment. The factions of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines were raging against each other with redoubled ferocity, and

---

\* Baron Macaulay, a prejudiced and therefore unexceptionable witness, writes as follows in regard to Boniface VIII. and Philip the Fair: "But something must be attributed to the character and situation of individuals. The man who bore the chief part in effecting this revolution was Philip the IV. of France, surnamed the Beautiful—a despot by position, a despot by temperament, stern, implacable, and unscrupulous, equally prepared for violence and for chicanery, and surrounded by a devoted band of men of the sword and of men of law. The fiercest and most high-minded of the Roman pontiffs, while bestowing kingdoms, and citing great princes to his judgment-seat, was seized in his palace by armed men, and so foully outraged that he died mad with rage and terror. 'Thus,' sang the great Florentine poet, 'was Christ in the person of his vicar, a second time seized by ruffians, a second time mocked, a second time drenched with the vinegar and the gall.' The seat of the Papal court was carried beyond the Alps, and the bishops of Rome became dependents of France. Then came the Great Schism of the West."—*Miscellanies, American Edit.*, p. 404.

† So thinks the writer in the *Dublin Review*, *sup. cit.*

were making that beautiful land a fearful scene of chaos and bloodshed. The Ghibelline chiefs—the Villanis, the Castruccis and others—seized upon and ruled with a rod of iron Milan and the other chief cities of the North; while the central Italian cities were filled with anarchy and bloody feuds by the rival factions struggling for and alternately obtaining the mastery. The ferocious struggle was relieved by the brilliant, but brief and evanescent attempt of “the Last of the Tribunes”—Rienzi—to rear the banner of popular freedom in the ancient city of the Cæsars.

In the midst of all this confusion, a new actor appears upon the agitated and bloody arena. The Popes at Avignon are called upon to contend, not merely with the hydra of faction in Italy, but with the hosts of the weak and unprincipled Louis of Bavaria, whom the German diet had elected emperor. Reading his character aright—as the event proved—Pope John XXII., availed himself of his time-honored right as the protector of the “Holy Roman Empire,” and refused to confirm the election. Thus the Papacy had scarcely emerged from the fiery contest with the French monarch, before it was hurried into another, if possible, even more bitter and protracted struggle with its hereditary adversary, the German emperor. Whether this contest was politic or not, or whether it could have been avoided without sacrificing principle, and especially without sacrificing the interests of Italy over which the Popes felt it a sacred duty to watch, we are scarcely able at this distance of time to determine. Certain it is, that the newly elected emperor, true to the policy of his predecessors, sought to subvert Italian independence, and that the leaders of the Ghibelline faction, which had always been the most deadly foe of Italian peace and liberty, openly took sides with him in the contest.

The pontiff having refused to crown Louis, the latter set up an anti-pope to perform this ceremony, which was still deemed essential. He marched his army into Italy, where the blood-stained Ghibelline leaders gave him a hearty welcome.

Whithersoever he went, his court and camp became the focus in which were concentrated all the elements of disaffection, discord, and heresy, which were then floating over the surface of European society.

“The intellect of Italy lent its aid to the sword of Germany. Heretical canonists and apostate monks met Louis on his way. Marsilius of Padua broached theories such as those which afterward found favor in the eyes of Queen Elizabeth and James I. Opinions, which hitherto had only scandalized and agitated the schools and universities, were now backed by the swords of German troopers. Jansenist war-cries and appeals to future councils, were anticipated in the camp, where Bavarian cavalry mingled with the men-at-arms of Milan and Lucca. Excommunicated bishops placed on the head of Louis the iron crown of Lombardy in the basilica of St. Ambrose; and in a few months, the whole mingled mass, made up of rival ambitions for the moment reconciled, national jealousies of long standing laid aside, and all sorts of discordant elements welded together by one common hatred of the Church, rolled on toward Rome.”\*

The prestige which surrounded a German emperor, who thus, in spite of the Pope, seized on the crown of Italy, flaunted his victorious banner in the face of the Papacy, and marched triumphant to the eternal city, brought to a head the mischievous factions and wild heresies which had hitherto, for more than a century, remained scattered, but had lain in a great measure hidden, over the different countries of Europe. The boiling cauldron of civil commotion and revolution always brings the dross and the scum to the surface of society. The remnants of the old Manichean heretics, whose ranks had been broken and scattered by the crusade against the Albigenses, nearly two centuries before, now came forth from their lurking places, openly preached their abominable doctrines, and unblushingly indulged in their licentious practices. They assumed different names in different places, but they were all marked with the general characteristics of that semi-pagan and ruinous heresy, which Manes had attempted to graft on the Christian system, as early as the third century. This de-

---

\* Dublin Review, Ibid.

testable heresy had infested different parts of Europe ever since the ninth century, traveling generally from East to West. Beguards, Paterins, Cathari, Fratricelli, Brethren of the Free Spirit, obscure and obscene Mystics of every hue and shade—from the openly obscene Fratricelli, to the more demure and decorous Waldenses—all were off-shoots from that impure root of Manicheism, which had produced the licentious and bloody Albigenses of the twelfth century.

These restless sectaries overran a great portion of Europe in the fourteenth century. Along the banks of the Rhine, and in the interior cities of Germany and France, as well as in Northern Italy, marching in the train of the camp of Louis of Bavaria, they preached their wicked doctrines, and practiced their wild or obscene fanaticism. They everywhere agitated the popular mind, and made it ripe for innovation. There was danger that, amidst the fearful commotions of the time, wild fanaticism would take the place of sober faith, dangerous mysticism, that of calm and enlightened piety. Says the writer, whom we have already quoted more than once :

“After all this, we are not surprised to find among the Brethren of the Free Spirit, as they called themselves, still darker and more shameful errors ; and when the Black Death came down with all its horrors upon a population already half-crazed with fanaticism, and thrown off their balance by the dissensions which raged between the Church and State, then the wild wail of the Flagellants was heard over all the hubbub of sounds which mingled with the rushing waters of the Rhine. From all the villages around, and from scattered homes in sequestered valleys, thousands of men and women came in long procession through the streets of Strasburg and Cologne ; friars and priests forgot their dignity to join in the motley crowd under the command of the layman who marshaled the array, while sober citizens, with their wives and daughters, laid aside their costly robes, to bare their shoulders to the scourge, and chimed in with the melancholy chant which called on all to mingle their blood with that of Jesus, to obtain mercy of God.”\*

It is almost needless to say, that all these ebullitions of fanaticism were almost as transitory as they were violent. Even that

---

\* Dublin Review, Ibid.

of the Flagellants, the most excusable of them all, as mingling with extravagance a deep faith in the necessity of uniting our personal sufferings with the atoning blood of Christ, for the expiation of our sins, was openly condemned by the Church, on account of its dangerous tendency. The Popes and the bishops everywhere set the seal of their condemnation on the doctrines and practices of the more dangerous fanatics; while the persuasive eloquence of the gentle Tauler, and the pathetic appeals of the blessed Henry de Suso, gradually calmed down the extravagant enthusiasm or fanaticism of the German Mystics along the banks of the Rhine. The fearful storm passed away almost as rapidly as it had gathered, and the Catholic atmosphere was again comparatively calm, if not unclouded. This danger had passed like a thousand others before, and the Church still stood in unimpaired vigor.

Next came the Great Schism of the West, which lasted for nearly forty years, at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century. It was occasioned by the return of the Popes from Avignon to Rome in 1378, and it was perpetuated by the French cardinals, who were encouraged by the French court. As we have elsewhere spoken somewhat at length upon this deplorable epoch in Church History,\* we shall not here dwell upon it, further than to remark on its influence on the minds of men in preparing them for the startling revolution of the sixteenth century.†

---

\* In the paper on the Great Schism, in the *Miscellanea*, p. 169, seq.

† Macaulay speaks as follows of the manner in which the imminent danger threatened by the Great Schism was averted:

“The Church, torn by schism, and fiercely assailed at once in England and the German empire, was in a situation scarcely less perilous than at the crisis which preceded the Albigensian crusade. But this danger also passed by. The civil power gave its strenuous support to the Church, and the Church made some show of reforming itself. The Council of Constance put an end to the schism. The whole Catholic world was again united under a single chief, and rules were laid down which seemed to make it improbable that the power of that chief would be grossly abused.”—*Miscell. sup. cit.* p. 405.

There is but little doubt that the evils and abuses which then afflicted the Church were even greater and more deplorable than they became a century later, at the era of the Reformation. The minds of men were then, if possible, even more unsettled, in consequence of the long-standing scandal of rival claimants to the Papacy contending for the tiara in the face of a shocked and startled Christendom. Yet in neither of the rival *obediencies*, did Catholic faith waver for a moment. The Papacy passed through this fiery ordeal unscathed, and it emerged from it, shorn somewhat, indeed, of its temporal consequence, but still as vigorous as ever in its divine strength. Nay, more so; for it was now thrown upon its own innate and inherent spirituality, in which lay the real source of its power, and the true secret of its divine vitality.

The human element of the Papacy was useful in its day; it was even necessary for the saving of society from barbarism and anarchy. But new social and political organizations had arisen under its fostering auspices, and its day for mingling actively in political events was already passed, or was fast passing away. Catholics have, in all ages, accurately distinguished between the accidental appendages of the Papacy, and its inherent divine character. Even in the height of the Great Schism, not a Catholic voice was raised against the Papacy itself—against its divine institution and vital necessity for the Church. The only controversy was a merely *personal* one: which of the rival claimants was fairly entitled to the place, or which was the true and lineal successor of St. Peter. Thus, in later days, our present illustrious pontiff was, to the full, as much respected and as reverently obeyed while an exile at Gaeta, as when seated in the Vatican.

Though there were crying abuses during the continuance of the Schism and at its close, and though the good and great of the Church cried out “for a reformation in the head and in the members,” yet no one then appears even to have thought of attempting this reformation by a *revolution outside* the Church, instead of a *reformation within*. Sensible

and considerate men knew full well, that the former was the part of true wisdom, while the latter would be sheer madness, aggravating a hundred-fold the evil it was intended to heal. A sick man is not to be cured by abandoning him to his fate, with taunts and denunciation at his wickedness for being sick, but by remaining patiently with him, studying his symptoms, and applying the necessary remedies. "A sore throat may be healed by proper remedies, one that is cut, never," as an old writer quaintly remarks. The Church of the fifteenth century, with the proceedings of the reforming Council of Constance and that of Basle,—even after the latter had degenerated into a schismatical conventicle, denouncing the Pope, and impiously setting up an anti-pope—might have taught the reformers of the sixteenth century a lesson of moderation; for amidst all the excitement of the former, and with all the excesses of the latter, not a man in either of those ecclesiastical conventions ever entertained a serious thought of severing the unity of the Church, by setting up a *reformed* communion outside its pale. The schism caused by the conventicle at Basle was based on no doctrinal difference, and it was soon healed by the love of unity which was re-awakened in the bosom of the anti-pope himself. The schism of the sixteenth century was permanent, and it was based on doctrinal issues all wrong in themselves—as their transparent contradictions and perpetual variations abundantly proved—but what is more to our present purpose, all the more glaringly wrong, because *outside* of unity, and under the ban of the Church built on a rock, and secured from falling by the infallible promises of her divine Founder.

Far from being appalled at the existence of abuses and scandals in the Church, or having their faith thereby weakened, enlightened Catholics expect them almost as a matter of course; considering human frailty, and the fact that God has made man a free agent, and will not infringe his liberty of action. The grace of God is indeed strong, but it may be, and often is, resisted. God will compel no one either to ac-



cept His truth, or to be governed by His commandments. He will compel none into heaven against their own free will, or without their own co-operation. Christ foretold that scandals should come, and we naturally look for them. What would have been thought of the disciple of Christ who should have abandoned His holy standard, and set up one in opposition, because of the scandal resulting, under the very eyes of Christ himself, from the treason of Judas? Would he have been viewed as a sound Protestant, or simply as an unreasoning madman?

To our minds, one of the most persuasive, if not strongest evidences that the Catholic Church is in reality the Church of Christ—"the pillar and ground of the truth"—is precisely her continued triumph over accumulated scandals and abuses, which would have crushed any merely human institution. Had not the Church and the Papacy been divine in origin, and divine in energy, the torrent of evils which overflowed society in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries would have overwhelmed the former, and the Great Schism would have ruined the latter. That, under such circumstances, with the princes of the world so often arrayed against the Church, and the masses of the people stirred up everywhere by the storms of fanaticism—with almost all the elements of society seemingly ripe for revolt, and prepared to rush in determined unison to the attack, she should still have conquered, and not only conquered, but become even stronger after, and seemingly in consequence of having passed through disasters which are so frightful to contemplate, even after the lapse of nearly five centuries;—this fact is, to our judgment, one of the most palpable and unanswerable arguments for establishing her superhuman origin, and her ever-enduring, because divine vitality. If the world, and the flesh, and the devil, all combined together, could have conquered her, they would surely have done so centuries ago.

In fact, the wonderful vitality of the Church was never perhaps more strikingly exhibited than it was precisely at the



close of the Great Schism, in the first quarter of the fifteenth century. Then she put down the mischievous heresy of the Hussites, after having in the previous century put down the kindred or rather parent heresy of the Wickliffites or Lollards in England. Her triumph in the fourteenth century over the numerous fanatical sects, to which we have already alluded, though truly wonderful, happening as it did during the continuance of the Schism or immediately before, was almost as nothing compared with her triumph over the truculent Hussite system, which, if successful, would have destroyed both society and religion in Europe, and throughout the world.\* For this heresy was based on principles which were utterly subversive of all law and of all government; on principles which were not a mere speculation or destined to remain a dead letter. This is apparent from the civil wars which the Hussites stirred up throughout Bohemia, which covered that kingdom with ruins and stained its soil with the blood of its citizens, and which threatened to penetrate through Germany into Western Europe and to make the whole structure of European society a complete wreck. The fierce and truculent spirit of this pestilent heresy is embodied in the fearful bequest of the Hussite leader, Ziska, who, dying amidst bloody civil wars which he and his master had caused, left his skin to be used on a war drum, the very sound of which might frighten his enemies!†

---

\* The most prominent and dangerous principle of the heresies of both Wickliffe and Huss was that which declared, that no man who was in the state of mortal sin had any right to hold office, to govern, or to require obedience from others, whether in Church or State. This principle plainly opened the door to anarchy, both civil and religious, and it was a direct encouragement and provocative to rebellion against constituted authority; for the rebel, whether in Church or State, had but to imagine and denounce his rulers as sinners before God—a very easy thing—and then his rebellion was fully justified.

† We have elsewhere treated this subject at some length, in special essays on Huss and the Council of Constance. (Miscellanea.) We think that the

It is not to be supposed that during all these terrible struggles with the powers of the earth and the hosts of darkness, and all these lamentable scandals, the sanctity of the Church was impaired. Very far from it. On the contrary, perhaps at no period of her history, before or since, has the holiness of the Church shone forth with greater lustre. Those scandals were but the shadows which served to bring out more clearly and prominently the lights in the picture of her sanctity. Her heavenly splendor gleamed forth the more brilliantly, precisely in consequence of the surrounding darkness. Wo to the world, had that light been extinguished! Mankind would have been left in utter and hopeless darkness. During the very worst period of her history, while bloody commotions and turbulent heresy were threatening her from without, and protracted schism was dividing her strength from within, she manifested an energy and a holiness of purpose, which baffled her enemies, encouraged her friends, and proved to all her heavenly origin and divine power.

Notwithstanding scandals and defections from her ranks, the great body of the clergy and laity remained sound and faithful, even during the worst times. The Popes were far in advance of their age, and were, in general, men of pure lives and upright conduct in their public administration. The monasteries, as in previous ages, continued to be the retreat of learned and pious men, who, after having become thoroughly imbued with the spirit of God in holy solitude and contemplation, went forth from their retreats to instruct the people and to scatter among them that heavenly fire which

---

facts therein developed, fully refute the usual popular charges against the Council of Constance and the Catholic Church, and prove how pernicious and dangerous were the maxims promulgated by Huss, and sought by him and his disciples to be established by force. If Huss and Wickliffe were suitable forerunners of the German reformers, the latter certainly do not borrow any special lustre from the former. As we shall see, both sets of reformers were animated by the same unscrupulous and truculent spirit, and both succeeded in bringing about similar commotions in society.

was burning in their own hearts. As the candid Protestant, Dr. Maitland, well remarks:

"Monasteries were beyond all price in those days of misrule and turbulence, as places where (it may be imperfectly, but better than elsewhere) God was worshiped; as a quiet and religious refuge for helpless infancy and old age, a shelter of respectful sympathy for the orphan maiden and the desolate widow; as central points whence agriculture was to spread over bleak hills and barren downs and marshy plains, and deal bread to millions perishing with hunger and its pestilential train; as repositories of the learning which then was, and well-springs for the learning which was to be; as nurseries of art and science, giving the stimulus, the means, and the reward to invention, and aggregating around them every head that could devise and every hand that could execute; as the nucleus of the city, which, in after days of pride, should crown its palaces and bulwarks with the crowning cross of its cathedral. This, I think, no man can deny. I believe it is true, and I love to think of it. I hope that I see the good hand of God in it, and the visible trace of His mercy that is above all His works. But if it is only a dream, however grateful, I shall be glad to be awakened from it; not indeed by the yelling of illiterate agitators, but by a quiet and sober proof that I have misunderstood the matter. In the meantime, let me thankfully believe that thousands of persons at whom Robertson and Jortin, and other such very miserable second-hand writers have sneered, were men of enlarged minds, purified affections, and holy lives—that they were justly revered by men—and above all, favorably accepted by God, and distinguished by the highest honor which He vouchsafes to those whom He has called into existence, that of being the channels of His love and mercy to their fellow-creatures."\*

In the learned work from which this is a quotation, Dr. Maitland, original documents in hand, scatters to the winds the injurious statements made by Dr. Robertson in his *View of Europe* introductory to his widely circulated and much read history of Charles V. He convicts the Scotch historian of greivous misstatement at almost every step. He shows

---

\* *The Dark Ages*. A series of essays intended to illustrate the state of religion and literature in the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. By the Rev. S. R. Maitland, D. D., F. R. S., and F. S. A., sometime librarian to the late Archbishop of Canterbury, and keeper of the MSS. at Lambeth. Third edition, London, 1853. Preface, iv, v.

also how Mosheim and McClaine, whom Robertson calls "his learned and judicious translator," were also guilty of frequent and unpardonable perversion and garbling of their authorities, which they nevertheless professed to quote from the original sources. The refutation is ample and it leaves nothing to be desired, so far as it goes. Our limits will not permit us to enter into many specifications; yet we can not help referring to his well-merited castigation of Robertson in reference to the quotation made by the latter from the well-known Homily on the duty of a Christian, by St. Eligius or St. Eloy, Bishop of Noyon, in France, in the seventh century. This is a pretty fair specimen of the manner in which "such miserable second-hand writers" as Robertson and his numerous copyists, are wont to deal with the facts of history, whenever the Catholic Church is concerned.

To prove his reckless assertion, that before the Reformation the whole duty of a Christian was regarded as being comprised in certain merely external observances, which "were either so unmeaning as to be altogether unworthy of the Being to whose honor they were consecrated, or so observed as to be a disgrace to reason and humanity," Dr. Robertson, following Mosheim, alleges the Homily of St. Eligius. He culls here and there from the homily such extracts as suit his purpose, wholly omitting others in the context itself which would have clearly proved the precise contrary of his proposition! Mosheim had given the original extract from the homily, with marks indicating that passages had been omitted; while in the version as given by Robertson all such indications are carefully removed. White, in the Bampton Lectures ascribed to him, "goes a step further, and prints the *Latin text* without any break or hint of omission;" while a previous writer—Jortin—had indicated in his translation but one out of at least seven such breaks in the text. Now what will be thought of Mosheim, Robertson, and all their imitators, when it appears from the original homily itself—a large portion of which is translated by Dr. Maitland—that the

holy Bishop spoke in it of almost all the duties of man toward God and his neighbor, of the solemn promises made by every Christian at his baptism, of the necessity of keeping the commandments of God and of the Church, in order to be saved, of the obligation of guarding against pride, impurity, and the other deadly sins; and in general, of all those things which the most enlightened Christian preacher of the present day would consider as embraced in the "whole duty of a Christian?" Such being the case, what judgment is to be formed of the miserable partisans, like Mosheim and his copyists, who, pretending to write *history*, pick out a sentence here and a phrase there from a discourse, tear them rudely from their connection, omit the most important parts, and then wind up with a flourish, that they have convicted the mediæval preacher of confining the *whole* duty of a Christian to certain merely external observances, to which he had only incidentally referred in his homily? As Dr. Maitland proves, the extract furnished does not embrace more than about a one-hundredth part of the homily, and it does not present two consecutive passages together.

To show that we do not exaggerate, we will present a somewhat copious extract from the homily itself, which will serve the double purpose of convicting Dr. Robertson, Mosheim, Jortin, and many other Protestant writers, of the most grievous misrepresentation, and of showing in what the "whole duty of a Christian" was deemed to consist in the middle ages. The garbled extracts of Dr. Robertson are printed in italics.

"It is not enough, most dearly beloved, for you to have received the name of Christians, if you do not do Christian works. To be called a Christian profits him who always retains in his mind, and fulfills in his actions, the commands of Christ; that is, who does not commit theft, does not bear false witness, who neither tells lies nor swears falsely, who does not commit adultery, who does not hate any body, but loves all men as himself, who does not render evil to his enemies, but rather prays for them, who does not stir up strife, but restores peace between those who are at variance. For these precepts Christ has deigned to give by his own mouth in the gospel, saying,

'Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not swear falsely, nor commit fraud; Honor thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself' (Matt. xix. 18, 19.) And also, 'All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.' (Matt. vii. 12.)

"And he has given yet greater, but very strong and fruitful (*valde fortia atque fructifera*) commands, saying, 'Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you,' and 'pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.' (Matt. v. 44.) Behold, this is a strong commandment, and to men it seems a hard one; but it has a great reward; hear what it is—'That ye may be,' he saith, 'the children of your Father which is in heaven.' Oh, how great a grace! Of ourselves we are not even worthy servants; and by loving our enemies we become sons of God. Therefore, my brethren, both love your friends in God, and your enemies for God; for he that loveth his neighbor, as saith the apostle, hath fulfilled the law.' (Rom. xiii. 8.) For he who will be a true Christian, must needs keep these commandments; because if he does not keep them, he deceives himself. He, therefore, is a good Christian, who puts faith in no charms or diabolical inventions, but places all his hope in Christ alone; who receives strangers with joy, even as if it were Christ himself, because he will say—'I was a stranger, and ye took me in, and inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' *He, I say, is a good Christian, who washes the feet of strangers, and loves them as most dear relations; who, according to his means, gives alms to the poor; who comes frequently to church: who presents the oblation which is offered to God upon the altar; who doth not taste of his fruits before he has offered somewhat to God; who has not a false balance or deceitful measures; who hath not given his money to usury; who both lives chastely himself, and teaches his sons and his neighbors to live chastely and in the fear of God; and as often as the holy festivals occur, lives continently even with his own wife for some days previously, that he may, with safe conscience, draw near to the altar of God; finally, who can repeat the Creed or the Lord's Prayer, and teaches the same to his sons and servants. He who is such an one, is, without doubt, a true Christian, and Christ also dwelleth in him, who hath said, 'I and the Father will come and make our abode with him.'* (John xiv. 23.) And, in like manner, he saith by the prophet, 'I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.' (2 Cor. vi. 16.)

"Behold, brethren, ye have heard what sort of persons are good Christians; and therefore labor as much as you can, with God's assistance, that the Christian name may not be falsely applied to you; but, in order that you may be true Christians, always meditate in your heart, on the commands of

Christ, and fulfill them in your practice; *redeem your souls from punishment while you have the means in your power*; give alms according to your means maintain peace and charity, restore harmony among those who are at strife, avoid lying, abhor perjury, bear no false witness, commit no theft, *offer oblations and gifts to churches, provide lights for sacred places according to your means*, retain in your memory the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and teach them to your sons. Moreover, teach and chastise those children for whom you are sponsors, that they may always live with the fear of God. Know that you are sponsors for them with God. *Come frequently also to church; humbly seek the patronage of the saints*; keep the Lord's day in reverence of the resurrection of Christ, without any servile work; celebrate the festivals of the saints with devout feeling; love your neighbors as yourselves; what you would desire to be done to you by others, that do to others; what you would not have done to you, do to no one; before all things have charity, for 'charity covereth a multitude of sins;' be hospitable, humble, casting all your care upon God, for he careth for you; visit the sick, seek out the captives, receive strangers, feed the hungry, clothe the naked; set at nought soothsayers and magicians; let your weights and measures be fair, your balance just, your bushel and your pint fair; nor must you claim back more than you gave, nor exact from any one usury for money lent. *Which, if you observe, coming with security before the tribunal of the eternal Judge, in the day of judgment, you may say, 'Give, Lord, for we have given;' show mercy, for we have shown mercy; we have fulfilled what thou hast commanded, do thou give what thou hast promised.'* \*\*

---

\* Given by Dr. Maitland, in the work above quoted, p. 111, seqq., where the greater portion of the homily is translated. It will be seen that he employs the words of the Protestant version in the scriptural quotations. In another place, (p. 150,) he furnishes an additional extract from the homily, in which the holy bishop warns his people against all superstition and idolatry, in the following impressive language:

"Before all things, however, I declare and testify unto you, that you should observe none of the impious customs of the pagans; neither sorcerers, nor diviners, nor soothsayers, nor enchanters; nor must you presume for any cause, or any sickness, to consult or inquire of them, for he who commits this sin immediately loses the sacrament of baptism. In like manner, pay no attention to auguries, and sneezings; and, when you are on a journey, do not mind the singing of certain little birds. But, whether you are setting out on a journey, or beginning any other work, cross yourselves in the name of Christ, and say the Creed and the Lord's Prayer with faith and devotion, and then the enemy can do you no harm. Let no Christian



While on the subject of mediæval homilies, we cannot refrain from extracting one entire from Dr. Maitland.\* It was delivered by the Foreman of the Goldsmith, the latter of whom had built a splendid monastery, and the former had been ordained priest, after having first become a monk. The people often visited his solitude to be edified by his virtues, and to profit by the words of simple, but touching eloquence which fell from his lips. His homilies on such occasions were short, and to the purpose. The following is the one to which we referred above:

“Brethren, hear what I say, with attention, and sedulously meditate on it in your hearts. God the Father, and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave His precious blood for us, you must love with all your soul, and with all your mind. Keep your hearts clean from wicked and impure thoughts; maintain brotherly love among yourselves; and love not the things that are in the world. Do not think about what you *have*, but what you *are*. Do you desire to hear what you are? The prophet tells you, saying, ‘All flesh is grass, all the goodness thereof as the flower of the field.’ (Isaiah xl. 6.) Consider how short the present life is; always fearing, have the judgment of God before your eyes. While there is opportunity, redeem your sins by alms and good works.”

This, for its brevity and comprehensiveness, may be viewed as a model sermon. We doubt whether, even at the present more enlightened day, any one could say more good things better, in so few words, and with so much simplicity and unction. Probably the best possible vindication of our Catholic ancestors is that which is contained in their own words, so far as these have been preserved to us, and in such of their works—as, for instance, their noble cathedrals, hospitals, and monas-

---

observe the day on which he leaves, or returns home, for God made all the days. Let none regulate the beginning of any piece of work by the day, or by the moon. Let none on the calends of January, join in the wicked and ridiculous things, the dressing like old women, or like stags, or other fooleries, nor make feasts lasting all night, nor keep up the custom of gifts and intemperate drinking.”

\* Ibid, p. 93-4.



teries—as time and the Vandalism of the sixteenth century have spared to us. Digby and Maitland—the former a Catholic and the latter a Protestant—have done much to give us an adequate idea of their usual trains of thought, and of their sometimes rude, but always earnest, simple, and eloquent manner of expressing them. As Dr. Maitland clearly proves, by numerous examples, they not only were well acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, but their very thoughts were wont to run in the channel of scriptural imagery, and their words were often little else but a tissue of scriptural quotations.\*

Take them all in all, they will compare most favorably with the men of the present day; and in faith, piety, and love of God and their neighbor, as well as in disinterestedness, they will certainly bear off the palm.

Let it, then, be borne steadily in mind, that the evils and scandals to which we have referred above, and which we have not sought to conceal or even to palliate, were exceptional; and that even after the original simplicity and fervor of the middle ages had greatly diminished, and their disinterested and simple spirit of faith, as the all-moving and animating principle of action, had, in a great measure, passed away along with the age of chivalry and the crusades, there still remained in the great body of the Church—in the laity as well as in the clergy—the solid foundations of truth and virtue, which found forcible expression in the general popular horror of heresy, and in the general detestation of the obscenities of vice so unblushingly exhibited in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Though sorely tried by wild, but fortunately transient heresies, and afflicted by grievous scandals during the two centuries immediately preceding the Reformation, the Church was still sound, not only in her truth, which could never fail, but in the general faith and fervent piety of the great body of her clergy and members.

This was clearly proved by the wonderful effects produced

---

\* Ibid. p 187, seqq., and p. 466, seqq.

all over Europe, during this very period, by the preaching of that wonderful man of God—St. Vincent Ferrer—who came forth, like another John the Baptist from the wilderness, to preach penance, and to arouse into greater activity the faith and piety of the people. Whithersoever he went, vast multitudes hung upon his lips; and the results of his preaching were most consoling to the afflicted Church. Such men as he, and his illustrious predecessor in the same career, St. Bernard of Clairvaux—were real reformers according to the true apostolic type; such reformers as the Church has been blessed with in all ages, and as she has always delighted to honor.

Even the unscrupulous D'Aubigné, is compelled to do some measure of justice to the Catholic Church of the middle ages. He makes the following avowal; which is invaluable, coming from so prejudiced a source:\*

“But first let us do honor to the Church of that middle period, which intervened between the age of the Apostles and the Reformers. The Church was still the Church, although fallen and more and more enslaved. In a word, she was at all times the most powerful friend of man. Her hands, though manacled, still dispensed blessings. Many eminent servants of Christ diffused during these ages a beneficent light; and in the humble convent—the sequestered parish—there were found poor monks and poor priests to alleviate bitter sufferings.”

But if the Church was still enabled, through the divine protection, to preserve pure the great body of her bishops and clergy, it was not surely from any aid which her pontiffs derived for this purpose, from the princes of the world. This good result was obtained, not in virtue of the co-operation of the latter, but often in spite of their untiring opposition. It seemed to have become an almost settled policy of the German emperors, and subsequently of the French kings, to throw every possible obstacle in the way of the appointment of good, disinterested, and zealous bishops. They thwarted the Popes at almost every step in the continued and earnest endeavors of the latter to secure good pastors to the vacant sees. They

---

\* Vol. I., p. 40, Edit. of Carter, 1843.

unscrupulously charged on the Popes the very crime of which they were themselves openly guilty—an avaricious grasping after the goods of the Church. When calumny failed, they had recourse to secret fraud and open violence; and they were always sure to find aiders and abettors among the higher clergy, several of whom their wicked and dangerous policy had already partially tainted.

This unfortunate spirit was strikingly exhibited in the adoption of what was called the Pragmatic Sanction, by the French king, Charles VII., in the year 1438, and in the persistent efforts made by the French Parliaments and German Diets to carry out its mischievous provisions for more than a century, and all this in spite of the earnest protests and eloquent appeals of the pontiffs. The provisions of this instrument virtually annihilated the primacy of the Pope in France and wherever else they were adopted and acted on. While professing great reverence for the chair of Peter, and promising obedience to the Pope as his successor, the French monarch, Charles VII., more than two centuries in advance of le Grand Monarque, Louis XIV.,—adopted a code of Gallican liberties, probably far more mischievous in their tendency than those contained in the subsequent Declaration of the Gallican clergy in 1682. And like Louis, Charles was backed in his war with the Pope, by a large body of the higher clergy of France; who should surely have already seen and *felt* enough of the dangers of court influence, to beware how they contributed to increase its patronage. But a species of vertigo had seized on many minds in consequence of the late schism; and this feeling of distrust of the Pope found expression in the schismatical proceedings of the conventicle at Basle, which dared continue its sessions after the papal prohibition, in 1433, and even after it had been dissolved, in 1437, by the undoubted Pope Eugenius IV.\* In spite of all

---

\* Eugenius issued a bull dissolving the Council, and ordering the bishops to convene again at Ferrara.

canonical law, a schismatical remnant of the bishops still continued to hold their sessions, and even went to the extreme length of attempting to depose the Pope, and thereby to originate another fearful schism.

The Pragmatic Sanction was nominally abrogated by the French king, Louis XI., in 1461; but this feeble or diplomatic monarch showed little disposition to compel his Parliament to repeal their previous enactments in its favor. Thus the evil went on almost unchecked for more than fifty years longer; until the Sanction was finally annulled by the General Council of Lateran, in a session held in 1515. Its final abrogation was fully agreed to by the French king, Francis I., in a conference held in the same year at Bologna, between him and Pope Leo X.

How very mischievous this parliamentary enactment was, and how many evils it must have entailed on the Church in France, especially in the way of foisting unworthy, or worldly-minded and courtly bishops into many of its sees, may be inferred from the fact, that it gave to the French monarch and his Parliament almost unlimited control over all such appointments, and forbade any interference therewith on the part of the Pope without their own previous consent. The king and his Parliament would be sure to appoint, not the best and the most holy men, but such as would be most likely to subserve their own worldly views, and to stand by them in their contests with the Pope. The spirit of the Pragmatic Sanction, with its manifold evils, extended also to Germany, and, to a greater or less extent, throughout all Christendom; and we have not a doubt that it contributed as much perhaps, as any other single agency, to prepare the minds of men for the subsequent religious revolution of the sixteenth century.

To exhibit still more clearly the true spirit and real tendency of the Pragmatic Sanction, we will here give an extract from a letter written on the subject by the renowned pontiff, Pius II., previously well known in the world of letters as *Æneas Sylvius*:—

"We ardently desire to see the nation of the Franks holy and without blemish; but this cannot be, unless this stain or wrinkle of the Sanction be removed, the manner of the introduction of which you all know. It was certainly not received on the authority of a general council, nor by a decree of the Roman pontiffs, though no enactment on ecclesiastical matters can stand as valid without the consent of the Roman See. . . . We do not attach so much importance to the hearing of causes, the bestowal of benefices, and many other things which we are thought to value. This it is which fills us with anguish, that we witness the perdition and ruin of souls, and that the glory of a most noble king is thereby tarnished. For how can it be tolerated, that laymen should become the judges of the clergy? That the sheep should hear and decide on the causes of their shepherds? Is it for this that we are 'a royal and priestly race'? We will not, for the sake of your honor, explain how greatly the sacerdotal authority has been impaired in France. This is well known by the bishops, who, at the beck of the secular power now draw, now sheathe the spiritual sword. But the Roman bishop, whose parish is the world, whose ecclesiastical territory is not bounded even by the ocean, has, in the kingdom of France, only so much jurisdiction as the Parliament may be pleased graciously to assign to him! He is not permitted to punish the sacrilegious, the parricide, the heretic, though an ecclesiastic, unless with the previous consent of the Parliament, whose authority is so great in the opinion of some, as to shut the door against our ecclesiastical censures. Thus the Roman pontiff, the judge of judges, is subject to the judgment of Parliament. If we admit this, we make the Church a monster, we introduce a hydra with many heads, and thereby totally extinguish unity. This is a dangerous matter, venerable brethren, which would bring confusion into the whole hierarchy."\*

---

\* Giesler. Text Book of Ecclesiastical History, Vol. III, p. 223-4, note. This prejudiced Protestant or infidel historian furnishes the original of the Letter to the French Bishops, as follows:

"Cupimus sanctam esse Francorum gentem et omni carere macula: at hoc fieri non potest, nisi hæc Sanctionis macula seu ruga deponatur, quæ quomodo introducta sit ipsi nostis. Certe non auctoritate generalis synodi nec Romanorum decreto pontificum recepta est, quamvis de causis ecclesiasticis tractatus absque placito Romanæ Sedis stare non possit. . . . Non ponderamus causarum auditionem, non beneficiorum collationem, non alia multa quæ curare putamur. Illud nos angit, quod animarum perditionem ruinamque cernimus, et nobilissimi regis gloriam labefactari. Nam quo pacto tolerandum est clericorum iudices laicos esse factos? Pastorum causas ores cognoscere? Siccine regale genus et sacerdotale sumus? Non explicabimus,

Though abrogated by Francis I., the spirit and the sting of the Pragmatic Sanction still remained. As we shall see hereafter, its spirit strongly influenced or rather infected the policy, and contributed to the misfortunes of this brilliant, but frivolous French monarch; it subsequently led, step by step, to the bloody civil wars brought upon France by the Huguenots; and finally its evil germs produced the poisonous tree of infidelity, which diffused its fatal and upas-like influence over France in the awful revolution of 1792–3. The French monarchs sowed the seeds of Gallicanism—first under Charles VII. in 1438, and then under Louis XIV. in 1682—and they reaped the final harvest of anarchy and revolution in 1792! History has its logic as well as philosophy.

Besides the spirit of disunion and distrust of the Papacy, which had been kept alive for centuries, chiefly by the princes of the earth, other agencies also more immediately contributed to prepare the way for the Reformation in the sixteenth century, and to facilitate its success. The revival of learning, and the invention of the art of printing, afforded incidental aids to the spread of the new gospel. The former came from Italy; the latter from Germany. The active Italian mind originated the intellectual movement, the more practical German mind seized on it, and scattered its thoughts over the earth on the wings of the press. Both the revival of

---

*honoris causa, quantum diminuta est in Gallia sacerdotalis auctoritas. Episcopi norunt qui pro nutu sæcularis potestatis spirituales gladium nunc exercent, nunc recludunt. Præsul vero Romanus, cujus parochia orbis est, cujus provincia nec oceano clauditur, in regno Franciæ tantum jurisdictionis habet, quantum placet Parlamento. Non sacrilegum, non paricidam, non hæreticum punire permittitur, quamvis ecclesiasticum, nisi Parlamenti consensus adsit, cujus tantam esse auctoritatem nonnulli existimant, ut censuris etiam nostris præcludere aditum possit. Sic judex judicum Romanus pontifex judicio Parlamenti subjectus est. Si hoc admittimus, monstruosam ecclesiam facimus, et hydram multorum capitum introducimus, et unitatem prorsus extinguimus. Periculosa res hæc est, venerabiles fratres, quæ hierarchiam omnem confunderet."*

letters and the art of printing were of Catholic origin; they were both abused, and treacherously turned, as powerful batteries, against the Church.

That Europe was indebted to Italy for the preservation of the ancient learning in the middle ages, and for the revival of letters in the fifteenth century; and that Italy, under the auspices of the Popes, was, during all those centuries, very far in advance of all other European nations, is freely admitted by such prejudiced English writers as Hallam and Macaulay. The latter writes as follows on this important historical fact; and we feel confident that the length of the extract will be pardoned on account of the interest which attaches to the subject:

“During the gloomy and disastrous centuries which followed the downfall of the Roman Empire, Italy had preserved, in a far greater degree than any other part of Western Europe, the traces of ancient civilization. The night which descended upon her, was the night of an Arctic summer:—the dawn began to reappear before the last reflection of the preceding sunset had faded from the horizon. It was in the time of the French Merovingians, and of the Saxon Heptarchy, that ignorance and ferocity seemed to have done their worst. Yet even then the Neapolitan provinces, recognizing the authority of the Eastern Empire, preserved something of Eastern knowledge and refinement. Rome, protected by the sacred character of its pontiffs, enjoyed at least comparative security and repose. Even in those regions where the sanguinary Lombards had fixed their monarchy, there was incomparably more of wealth, of information, of physical comfort, and of social order, than could be found in Gaul, Britain, or Germany.”

Under the auspices of the pontiffs, liberty, manufactures, and commercial prosperity were inaugurated; for Macaulay adds:

“Thus liberty, partially, indeed, and transiently revisited Italy; and with liberty came commerce and empire, science and taste, all the comforts and all the ornaments of life. The crusades, from which the inhabitants of other countries gained nothing but relics and wounds, brought the rising commonwealths of the Adriatic and Tyrrhene seas a large increase of wealth, dominion, and knowledge. Their moral and their geographical position enabled them to profit alike by the barbarism of the West and the civilization of the East. Their ships covered every sea. Their factories



rose on every shore. Their money changers set their tables in every city. Manufactures flourished. Banks were established. The operations of the commercial machine were facilitated by many useful and beautiful inventions. We doubt whether any country of Europe, our own perhaps excepted, have at the present time reached so high a point of wealth and civilization as some parts of Italy had attained four hundred years ago." . . .

"Fortunately John Villani has given us an ample and precise account of the state of Florence in the earlier part of the fourteenth century. The revenue of the republic amounted to three hundred thousand florins, a sum which, allowing for the depreciation of the precious metals, was at least equivalent to six hundred thousand pounds sterling; a larger sum than England and Ireland, two centuries ago, yielded annually to Elizabeth—a larger sum than, according to any computation which we have seen, the Grand-duke of Tuscany now derives from a territory of much greater extent. The manufacture of wool alone employed two hundred factories and thirty thousand workmen. The cloth annually produced sold, at an average, for twelve hundred thousand florins; a sum fairly equal, in exchangeable value, to two millions and a half of our money. Four hundred thousand florins were annually coined. Eighty banks conducted the commercial operations, not of Florence only, but of all Europe. The transactions of these establishments were sometimes of a magnitude which may surprise even the contemporaries of the Barings and the Rothchilds. Two houses advanced to Edward III., of England, upwards of three hundred thousand marks, at a time when the mark contained more silver than fifty shillings of the present day, and when the value of silver was more than quadruple of what it now is. The city and its environs contained a hundred and seventy thousand inhabitants. In the various schools about ten thousand children were taught to read; twelve hundred studied arithmetic; six hundred received a learned education. The progress of elegant literature and of the fine arts was proportioned to that of the public prosperity. . . . No tongue ever furnished more gorgeous and vivid tints to poetry; nor was it long before a poet appeared who knew how to employ them. Early in the fourteenth century came forth the Divine Comedy, beyond comparison the greatest work of imagination which had appeared since the poems of Homer. The following generation produced, indeed, no second Dante; but it was eminently distinguished by general intellectual activity. The study of the Latin writers had never been wholly neglected in Italy."\*

The literary sect of the Humanists arose in Italy about the middle of the fifteenth century. These new men of letters

---

\* *Miscell. Am. Edit.*, p. 21 seqq. *Review of the Works of Macchiavelli.*



sought to revive Greek literature, and the Platonian philosophy in opposition to that of Aristotle, which had long obtained a firm foothold in the schools. They disparaged all barbarisms in style, and they valued a finely turned sentence conveying a sneer against the clergy more highly than a sound and orthodox sentiment conveyed in the more homely language of the school-men. The Dominicans were their special aversion, for two principal reasons: first, their theologians were usually more or less barbarous in their Latin; and secondly, they had been appointed censors of books, and, in virtue of their office, they were compelled often to condemn the works of the Humanists, in spite of their elegant Latinity. This last fact has special significance, when we reflect that Tetzels, the preacher of the Indulgences in Germany, was a Dominican; and that Erasmus, the leader of the German Humanists, united with Luther in hurling at the devoted head of the Dominicans his polished but envenomed shaft of ridicule and invective.

The early progress of the German Reformation was also facilitated by the over-indulgence, if not negligence of the Italian Humanists, who, with their great and munificent patron, Leo X., were at first inclined to look upon the controversy between the Augustinian monk Luther, and the Dominican monk Tetzels, as a mere "monkish squabble." Soon, indeed, they discovered their mistake; but it was too late fully to check the evil. It was not a merely local or transient rebellion against Church authority which was at hand, but a mighty revolution, which was to shake Christendom to its very centre; and to endure, with its long and pestilent train of evils, with its Babel-like sound and confusion of tongues, with its first incipient and then developed infidelity, probably to the end of the world!

Another weapon which the German reformers wielded with terrible effect against the Church, was their impassioned and reiterated declaration, that the Primacy of the Pope was subversive of all German liberty. All the contests between the

German emperors and the Popes during the middle ages were brought up again, exaggerated and distorted by passion, before the public mind, and the Germans were told that they must throw off the yoke of the Pope, if they would preserve their ancient franchises. This appeal to national prejudices was as successful as the basis on which it rested was wholly unfounded in the facts of history. The truth is, that the Germans owed almost every thing, their liberties included, to the interposition of the Popes checking the usurpations and despotism of their emperors. This is apparent from the fact, that they were really less free after than they had been before the Reformation. This we hope to prove hereafter. In the mean time, we invite attention to the following testimony on this subject, furnished by the Scotch Presbyterian writer, Samuel Laing, surely an unexceptionable witness. He is speaking of the past and present condition of Germany; in reference precisely to the influence exercised by the Papacy on its liberty:

“The principle that the civil government, or State, or Church and State united, of a country is entitled to regulate its religious belief, has more of intellectual thralldom in it than the power of the popish Church ever exercised in the darkest ages; for it had no civil power joined to its religious power. It only worked through the civil power of each country. The Church of Rome was an independent, distinct, and often an opposing power in every country to the civil power; A CIRCUMSTANCE IN THE SOCIAL ECONOMY OF THE MIDDLE AGES, TO WHICH, PERHAPS, EUROPE IS INDEBTED FOR HER CIVILIZATION AND FREEDOM—for not being in the state of barbarism and slavery of the east, and of every country, ancient and modern, in which the civil and religious power have been united in one government. Civil liberty is closely connected with religious liberty—with the Church being independent of the State. . . . In Germany the seven Catholic sovereigns have 12,074,700 Catholic subjects, and 2,541,000 Protestant subjects. The twenty-nine Protestant sovereigns, including the four free cities, have 12,113,000 Protestant subjects, and 4,966,000 Catholic. Of these populations in Germany, those which have their point of spiritual government without their States, and independent of them—as the Catholics have at Rome—enjoy certainly more spiritual independence, are less exposed to the intermeddling of the hand of civil power with their religious concerns,

than the Protestant populations, which, since the Reformation, have had Church and State united in one government, and in which each autocratic sovereign is *de facto* a home-pope. The Church affairs of Prussia in this half century, those of Saxony, Bavaria, and the smaller principalities, such as Anhalt Kothén, in all of which the State has assumed and exercised power inconsistently with the principles, doctrines, observances, and privileges of the Protestant religion, clearly show that the Protestant church on the continent, as a power, has become an administrative body of clerical functionaries, acting under the orders of the civil power or State.”\*

From the foregoing summary view of the events affecting religion in Europe, during the centuries which preceded the Reformation, we draw the following conclusions, in the soundness of which we believe that every well-informed and impartial man will be disposed to concur with us:

1. That the amount and extent of the scandals and abuses complained of during this period have been greatly exaggerated; and that the good more than counterbalanced the evil. Evil always excites more attention and makes more noise in the world than good; and what contemporary writers, even if they were otherwise good men, say of abuses, and of the persons to whom they are to be ascribed, will generally be found to be highly colored; especially if the writers, as is often the case, have their feelings enlisted as partisans on one side or the other. Feeling must be calmed down, excitement must pass away, and affairs must fully work themselves out, before a correct and reliable judgment can be formed on any series of events.

2. That these abuses and scandals generally originated in the world and its princes, not in the Church and its chief pastors; most of them being due to the fact, that bad men were thrust into the high places of the Church by worldly

---

\* Notes of a Traveler on the Social and Political State of France, Prussia, Switzerland, Italy, and other parts of Europe, during the present century. By Samuel Laing, Esq., author of “A Journal of a Residence in Norway” and “A Tour in Sweden.” From the second London edition. Philadelphia, Cary & Hart, 1846. 1 vol. 8vo. p. 194.

mind and avaricious princes in spite of the Popes, whose settled policy it was to protest with all their might against a line of conduct so very ruinous to the best interests of religion. And such being clearly the case, it is most unjust to charge those scandals on the Church or on the pontiffs. If the princes of the earth could have ruined the Church, they would have done so by their iniquitous and oppressive enactments. That they did not succeed in inflicting on her more than occasional and temporary wounds, we owe it to the divine vitality of the Church, and to the noble and dauntless opposition of the Popes.

3. That there was a lawful and efficacious remedy for all such evils, which consisted in removing their obvious cause, and giving to the Popes their due power and influence in the nomination of bishops, and in the deliberations of general ecclesiastical councils, the judgments of which had hitherto been always viewed as final: that, in one word, *reformation within* the Church, and not *revolution outside* of it, was the only proper, lawful, and efficacious remedy for existing evils, and the one which had always been invoked by the wise and the good in all previous ages of Christianity.

4. Finally, that the fact of Christians having at length felt prepared to resort to the desperate and totally wrong remedy of revolution, was owing to a train of circumstances which had caused faith to wane and grow cold, and which now appealed more to the passions than to reason, more to human considerations than to the principles of divine faith and the interests of eternity.

That the drama was strictly in accordance with its programme, and that the Protestant Reformation throughout Europe, both in its inception and in its consummation, was rather the working out of the three great concupiscences referred to by an inspired apostle, than of a sincere and earnest love of truth, and of a real desire of reformation, will, unless we are greatly mistaken, sufficiently appear from the facts contained in the following pages. In regard to Germany

and Switzerland, we propose, in the first volume, to examine the following questions:

1. Whether the men who brought about the Reformation in Germany were such as God could or would have employed to do His work?

2. Whether the motives which prompted, and the means which were employed to accomplish that revolution, were such as God could sanction?

3. Whether the Reformation really effected a reform in religion and in morals?

And 4, whether its influence was beneficial to society, by developing the principles of free government, and promoting literature and civilization?

# PART I.

## CHARACTER OF THE REFORMERS.

---

### CHAPTER I.

#### LUTHER AND THE OTHER GERMAN REFORMERS.

D'Aubigné's opinion—A reformed key—Luther's parents—His early training—A naughty boy—Convents—Being "led to God," and "not led to God"—He enters the Augustinian convent—Austerities—A "bread bag"—His faith and scruples—His humility and zeal—Luther a reformer—Grows worse—becomes reckless—His sincerity tested—Saying and unsaying—Misgivings—Tortuous windings—How to spite the Pope—Curious incident—Melancthon and his mother—Luther's talents and eloquence—His taste—His courage and fawning—His violence and coarseness—Not excusable by the spirit of his age—His blasphemies—Recrimination—Christian compliments—"Conference with the devil"—Which got the better of the argument—Luther's morality—Table-talk—His sermon on marriage—A Vixen—How to do "mischief to the Pope"—A striking contrast—How to fulfill vows—His marriage—Misgivings—Epigrams and satires—Curious incidents in his last sickness—Death-bed confession—His death—The reformed key used—Character of the other reformers.

D'AUBIGNÉ compares the reformers to the Apostles;\* and his favorite theory is, that the Reformation itself was but "the reappearance of Christianity."† Speaking of the life and character of Luther, he says "the whole Reformation was there."‡ "The different phases of this work succeeded each other in the mind of him who was to be the instrument for it, before it was publicly accomplished in the world. The knowledge of the Reformation effected in the heart of Luther

---

\* B. ii, p. 118, vol. i. Our quotations from D'Aubigné are from the first American edition, in three volumes 12mo, to which two others have been since added, to which we may refer hereafter.

† Pref. iv.

‡ Vol. i, p. 118.

himself is, in truth, the key to the Reformation of the Church.”\*

We will abide by this test. We will examine for a brief space the external form, and the internal structure—the many tortuous turnings and intricate wards of this “key” of the Protestant Reformation; and we will be enabled to estimate the character of the latter,—which, as we hope to show, was a “lock on the understanding”—from the properties of the former. Dropping the figure, we will compare the character of Luther while he continued a Catholic, during the first thirty-four years of his life, with what it subsequently became after he had turned reformer, or for the last twenty-nine years of his life—from 1517 to 1546. If we ascertain that his own character underwent a change greatly for the worse during the latter period, we will be compelled, by D’Aubigné’s own rule, to admit that the general tendency of the Reformation was evil.

To facilitate the understanding of our remarks, and to obviate repetition, we here state that Luther was born at Eisleben, in Saxony, on the 10th of November, 1483; that he attended successively the schools of Mansfeld, Magdeburg, and Eisenach, and completed his education in the university of Erfurth; that he was ordained priest in 1506, turned reformer in 1517, was married in 1525, and died on the 17th of February, 1546, in the sixty-third year of his age.

While under the influence of the Catholic Church, he was probably a moderately good man; he was certainly a very bad one after he left its communion. His parents were poor, but they seem to have been pious, especially his mother. From an early age, they labored to train him up in sentiments of piety, as well as to imbue his mind with the elements of learning. “As soon as he was old enough to receive instruction,” says D’Aubigné, “his parents endeavored to communicate to him the knowledge of God, to train him in

---

\* D’Aubigné, vol. i, p. 118.

His fear, and to form him to the practice of the Christian virtues. They applied the utmost care to his earliest domestic education.\* He was taught the heads of the catechism, the ten commandments, the Apostles' creed, the Lord's prayer, some hymns, some forms of prayer, a Latin grammar composed in the fourth century by Donatus; in a word, all that was studied in the Latin school of Mansfeld.†—In the good old Catholic times, then, parents knew their duty to their children, and people were not so stupidly ignorant after all!

Luther seems to have been a very naughty boy; for while at school in Mansfeld, "his master flogged him fifteen times in one day;"‡ and, in his after-life, he was wont to complain of the cruel treatment he received from his parents. "My parents treated me cruelly, so that I became very timid: one day, for a mere trifle, my mother whipped me till the blood came. They truly thought they were doing right; but they had no discernment of character, which is yet absolutely necessary, that we may know when, on whom, and how, punishment should be inflicted."§—His parents probably acted on the old maxim, "spare the rod and spoil the child;" and if he was subsequently so much spoiled, even with all the previous training of the rod, what would he have been without its salutary restraint?

Though "it appears that the child was not yet led to God,"|| still he evinced a great fund of piety. "But even at this early age, the young man of eighteen did not study merely with a view of cultivating his understanding; there was within him a serious thoughtfulness, a heart looking upwards, which God gives to those whom He designs to make His most zealous servants. Luther felt that he depended entirely on God,—a simple and powerful conviction, which is at once a principle of deep humility, and an incentive to great undertakings. He fervently invoked the Divine bless-

\* D'Aubigné, vol. i, p. 122.

† Ibid. p. 123.

‡ Ibid.

§ Luth. Opp. Wittemb. xxii, 1785.

|| D'Aubigné, vol. i, p. 123.



ing upon his labors. Every morning he began the day with prayer; then he went to church; afterwards he commenced his studies, and he never lost a moment in the course of the day. 'To pray well,' he was wont to say, 'was the better half of study.'"<sup>\*</sup>—This looked a little like being "led to God."

On the 17th of August, 1505, he entered into the Augustinian convent at Erfurth, being then in the 22d year of his age. He was induced to take this important step by a vow he had made to consecrate himself entirely to God, in case of his deliverance from a terrific storm, by which he was overtaken near Erfurth, and in which, according to one account,<sup>†</sup> his friend Alexis was stricken dead by lightning at his side. "At length he is with God," says D'Aubigné. "His soul is safe. He is now to obtain that holiness he so ardently desired."<sup>‡</sup>—The monasteries were then not so bad as Protestants would fain represent them. "They often contained Christian virtues"—D'Aubigné himself tells us—"which grew up beneath the shelter of a salutary retirement; and which if they had been brought forth to view, would have been the admiration of the world. They who possessed these virtues, living only with each other and with God, drew no attention from without, and were often unknown even to the small convent in which they were inclosed—their life was known only to God."<sup>§</sup>

Luther, it would seem, entered the convent with the purest motives, and labored in it to overcome himself by mortification and self-denial, and to acquire humility and all the Christian virtues. "But it was not to gain the credit of being a great genius that he entered the cloister; it was to find the aliments of piety to God."<sup>||</sup> The monks "imposed on him the meanest offices. They perhaps wished to humble

<sup>\*</sup> Mathesius, 3, apud D'Aubigné, vol. i, p. 130.

<sup>†</sup> Discredited, perhaps with reason, by D'Aubigné (*ibid.*, p. 135, note.)

<sup>‡</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>§</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146–7.

<sup>||</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

the doctor of philosophy, and to teach him that his learning did not raise him above his brethren.... The former master of arts was obliged to perform the functions of door-keeper, to open and shut the gates, to wind up the clock, to sweep the church, to clean the rooms. Then, when the poor monk, who was at once porter, sexton, and servant of the cloister, had finished his work—*'cum sacco per civitatem'*—*'with your bag through the town'* cried the brothers; and, loaded with his bread-bag, he was obliged to go through the streets of Erfurth, begging from house to house, and perhaps at the doors of those very persons who had been either his friends or his inferiors. But he bore it all. Inclined from his natural disposition to devote himself heartily to whatever he undertook, it was with his whole soul that he had become a monk. Besides, could he wish to spare the body? To regard the satisfying of the flesh? Not thus could he acquire the humility, the holiness he had come to seek within the walls of a cloister.”\*

How strongly does not this spirit of self-denial contrast with the gross self-indulgence of his subsequent life, when he had thrown off all those wholesome but now antiquated restraints! Well does his panegyrist remark, that “there was then in Luther little of that which made him in after-life the reformer of the church.”† As we shall see, this remark is strikingly true. The change which was wrought in his own life and conduct, by the principles he subsequently broached and carried out in practice, was indeed striking and radical, but certainly greatly for the worse.

He received ordination with fear and trembling at his own unworthiness. So great was his awe of the holy sacrament, that in a procession at Eisleben, on the feast of Corpus Christi, he almost fainted through overpowering reverence for Christ truly present.‡ He was scrupulous to a fault. He frequently gave way to fits of despondency and melancholy,

---

\* D'Au<sup>h</sup>igné, vol i, p. 139.

† Ibid., p. 138.

‡ Ibid., p. 157.

which were with difficulty removed. As a panacea for his troubled mind, an aged monk called his attention to that article of the Apostles' creed in which we profess to believe "in the forgiveness of sins."\* The humble confidence in our forgiveness through God's mercy, which this article is so well calculated to inspire, was afterwards reduced by the reformer to an absolute and infallible certainty, that his own sins were forgiven. So apt are men to run into extremes, especially those who are addicted to scruples! When these are removed—as was unhappily the case with Luther—they too often are exchanged for the opposite extreme of wanton recklessness. This remark may furnish a key to the reformer's whole subsequent life.

His deep humility, we are further informed, caused him to shrink from the office of preaching. It was with great difficulty that Staupitz, his superior, could overcome this reluctance. "In vain Staupitz entreated him: 'No, no,' replied he, 'it is no light thing to speak to men in God's stead.'" "An affecting instance of humility in this great reformer of the church,"† adds D'Aubigné. He unhappily gave no evidence of any such spirit, after he had turned reformer, as we shall see presently. Had he always preserved this humble and truly Christian spirit, the peace of the Church would in all probability never have been disturbed.

In 1516, but one year before the commencement of the Reformation, Staupitz directed him to make the visitation of the forty convents belonging to the Augustinian Order in Germany.‡ He discharged this difficult office with singular prudence and zeal. He labored to reform abuses, gave salutary counsels, and animated the monks to the practice of every virtue. A little later, he gave additional evidence of Christian humility. Having received a new gown from the elector Frederick of Saxony, he thus wrote to Spalatin, the elector's secretary: "It would be too fine, if it were not a

---

\* D'Aubigné, vol. i, p. 154.

† Ibid., p. 161.

‡ Ibid., p. 191, seqq.

prince's gift. I am not worthy that any man should think of me, much less a prince, and so noble a prince. Those are most useful to me who think worst of me. Present my thanks to our prince for his favor, but know that I desire neither the praises of thyself nor of others: all the praise of man is vain, the praise that cometh from God being alone true."\*

During this period of his Catholic life, it would appear from the testimony of his eulogist, that he was no less zealous and devoted than he was humble. When the plague broke out in Wittenburg, in 1516, his friends advised him to fly from a malady which swept off whole multitudes. Luther answered: "You advise me to flee—but whither shall I flee? I hope the world will not go to pieces, if brother Martin should fall. If the plague spreads, I will send the brethren away in all directions; but for my part, I am placed here: obedience does not allow me to leave the spot, until He who called me hither, shall call me away."† He did not behave thus courageously, when the pest again visited Wittenburg, after he had left the Church. When the blessed light of the new gospel had broken upon his beclouded spirit, he was not so well prepared to meet death in order to succor his suffering brethren, but he openly proclaimed the narrow and selfish doctrine, that the minister of God fulfilled his duty, if he administered the sacrament to his flock four times in the year; and that it was an intolerable burden to be under the obligation to do more, especially in time of plague!‡

Such was Luther before he began the Reformation in 1517. How changed, alas! was he after this period—heu! quantum mutatus ab illo! He is no longer the humble monk, the scrupulous priest, the fervent Christian, that he was before!

---

\* *Lutheri Epistolæ*, edit. De Wette, i, p. 45, 46: apud D'Aub. vol. i, p. 195.

† *Epist.* i, p. 42. 26 Oct. 1516. Apud D'Aub. vol. i, p. 194.

‡ Apud Audin, *Life of Luther*, American translation, p. 27. He quotes Michelet's *Memoires de Luther*. This is the edition of Audin from which we shall usually quote.

Amidst the storm which he excited, he gradually suffered shipwreck of almost every virtue, and became reckless and depraved; the mere creature of impulse, the child of pride, the victim of violent and degrading passion. We trust to make all this appear from certain and undoubted facts, which no one can deny. And the result of our reasoning will be the irresistible conclusion, that for him at least, the Reformation was a down-hill business: and, according to D'Aubigné's test, that this was its general tendency.

His own deterioration, and the work of the Reformation were both gradual; and they went hand in hand. He did not at first seem to aim at any change in the doctrines and institutions of the Catholic Church; this thought was developed only afterwards. In the 38th, 67th, and 71st of his famous ninety-five theses published against Tetzel on the 1st of Nov. 1517, he expressly maintained the authority of the Pope, and the Catholic doctrine on indulgences. He professed only to aim at the correction of abuses.

It is a mooted question, whether jealousy of the Dominican order, which had been intrusted with the preaching of the indulgences, to the exclusion of his own rival order of the Augustinians, influenced him in his first attack on Tetzel. Such seems to have been the opinion of the enlightened Pontiff, Leo X., who, when the controversy was first reported to him, remarked, smiling, "that it was all a mere monkish squabble originating in jealousy."\* Such also was the opinion of many other ancient writers. Certain it is that this jealousy, if it did not originate, at least fed and maintained the discussion. Luther's order, with its principal members—Staupitz, Link, Lange, and others—were his warmest advocates; while the Dominicans—Cajetan, Hochstraet, Eck, and Prierias—were his chief opponents. The Dominican order continued faithful

---

\* Che coteste erano invidie fratesche. Brandelli, a contemporary Dominican writer. Hist. Trag. pars 3.

to the church ; the Augustinians of Germany abandoned it almost without an exception.\*

Had he paused at the proper time, had he continued to leave untouched the venerable landmarks of Catholic faith, and confined himself to the correction of local disorders, all Catholics would have applauded his zeal. Instead of being reckoned with Arius, Pelagius, Wicliffe, and other heresiarchs, he would then have found a niche in the temple of Catholic fame, with an Ambrose, a Gregory VII., and a Bernard ! His great talents, properly regulated, might have been immensely beneficial to the Church of God. But, standing on the brink of a precipice, he became dizzy, and fell ; and, like Lucifer of old, he drew after him one-third of the stars of God's kingdom on earth. The old Catholic tree bore some evil fruits of abuses—generally local and unauthorized, as we shall see in the proper place—and, instead of pruning it discreetly and nurturing its growth, he recklessly lopped off all its branches, and even attempted to tear it up by the roots, under the pretext, forsooth, of making it bear fruit !

The question has often been asked, was Luther sincere ? We have no doubt of his sincerity nor much of his piety, until he turned reformer. Perhaps, too, he might have been, to a certain extent, sincere during the first year of his reformatory career. God only can judge the human heart ; and it would be rash in us to attempt to fathom what only He can search with unerring accuracy. Still we have some facts whereon to base a judgment in the particular case of the German reformer.

There is little doubt that he had some misgivings at first. He himself tells us that “he trembled to find himself alone against the whole Church.” † He testifies on this subject as

---

\* Several of the members, however, seem to have subsequently returned to the communion of the Church, and among them Staupitz, the superior.

† “Solus primo eram.” Opp. in Præf. Edit. Wittenb. Quoted by D'Aubigné.

follows; "How often has my conscience disturbed me! How often have I said to myself: dost thou imagine thyself wiser than all the rest of mankind? Darest thou imagine that all mankind have been in error for so long a series of years."\* And again: "I am not so bold as to assert that I have been guided in this affair by God; upon this point I would not wish to undergo the judgment of God."†

He regretted at first that his Theses had become so public, and had made so great a stir among the people. "My design," says he "was not to make them so public. I wished to discuss the various points comprised in them with some of our associates and neighbors. If they had condemned them, I would have destroyed them; if they had approved of them, I would have published them."‡ "He was disturbed and dejected at the thought"—of standing alone against the Church—"doubts, which he thought he had overcome, returned to his mind with fresh force. He trembled to think that he had the whole authority of the Church against him. To withdraw himself from that authority—to resist that voice which nations and ages had humbly obeyed—to set himself in opposition to that Church which he had been accustomed from his infancy to revere as the mother of the faithful: he, a despicable monk—it was an effort beyond human power."§

Luther himself tells us how he struggled against this feeling; how he lulled to rest that still small voice of conscience within his bosom. "After having triumphed, by means of the Scriptures, over all opposing arguments, I at last overcame, by the grace of Christ (!) with much anguish, labor, and great difficulty, the only argument that still stopped me, namely, 'that I must hear the Church;' for, from my heart, I honored the Church of the Pope as the true Church," etc.||

\* Opp. Lutheri. Germ. Edit. Geneva, vol. ii, fol. 9.

† Ibid., vol. i, p. 364.

‡ Epist. Collect. De Wette, vol. i, p. 95.

§ D'Aubigné, vol. i, p. 257. || Luth. Opp. Lat. i, 49. Ibid., i, 258.

He foresaw the dreadful commotions of which he would be the author, and trembled at the thought! "I tremble—I shudder at the thought, that I may be an occasion of discord to such mighty princes."\*—Still he recklessly persevered!

But these scruples were but "a remnant of popery:" soon he succeeded in lulling his conscience into a fatal security. An awful calm succeeded the storm. The pride of being at the head of a strong party; the praises of the students and professors of the Wittenburg university; the flattery of friends, and the smiles of the powerful elector of Saxony; soon quieted the rising qualms of conscience. The following facts, selected almost at random from a mass of evidence of the same kind, may contribute to throw additional light on the question of his sincerity.

On the 30th of May, 1518, which was Trinity Sunday, he wrote a letter to Pope Leo X., of which the following is the concluding passage:

"Therefore, most holy father, I throw myself at the feet of your holiness, and submit myself to you with all that I have and all that I am. Destroy my cause or espouse it; pronounce either for or against me; take my life or restore it, as you please: I will receive your voice as that of Christ himself, who presides and speaks through you. If I have deserved death, I refuse not to die: the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. May He be praised for ever and ever. May He maintain you to all eternity! Amen."†

The sequel tested the sincerity of this declaration. But even while he was penning it, or very shortly afterwards, he preached from the pulpit of Wittenburg against the power of the Pope to fulminate excommunication, and he was engaged in circulating inflammatory tracts breathing the same spirit.‡

\* "Inter tantos principes dissidii origo esse valde horreo et timeo." Ep. i, 93.

† Luth. Epist. vol. i, p. 121. Edit. De Wette.

‡ "Habui nuper sermonem ad populum de virtute excommunicationis, ubi taxavi obiter tyrannidem et inscitiam sordidissimi illius vulgi officialium commissariorum vicariorum," etc.—Epist. ad Wencesl. Link, Julii, 1518.



In 1519 he had a conference with Miltitz, the papal envoy, to whose perfect satisfaction he arranged every thing, promising to keep silence in future as to the questions in controversy. The good nuncio embraced him, wept with joy, and invited him to a banquet, at which he loaded him with caresses. While this affecting scene was enacted, Luther, in a private letter to a friend, called him "a deceiver, a liar, who parted from him with a Judas-like kiss and crocodile tears;"\* and, in another letter, to Spalatin, he wrote: "Let me whisper in your ear; I do not know whether the Pope is Antichrist, or only his apostle,"† etc. And yet, in less than a month after this very time, on the 3d of March, 1519, he wrote to the Pope in these words of reverence and submission:

"Most holy father, I declare it in the presence of God, and of all the world, I never have sought, nor will I ever seek, to weaken by force or artifice the power of the Roman church or of your holiness. I confess that there is nothing in heaven or earth that should be preferred above that church, save only Jesus Christ the Lord of all."‡

The same man who wrote this, impugned the Primacy of the Pope the very same year in the famous discussion with Doctor Eck at Leipsic! Was he—could he be sincere in all this? But, further, when on the 3d of October, 1520, he became acquainted with the bull of Leo X., by which his doctrines were condemned, he wrote these remarkable words: "I will treat it as a forgery, though I believe it to be genuine."§

The following evidence will greatly aid us in judging of the motives which guided Luther in pushing forward the work of the Reformation. What those motives were he surely was the best judge. Let us then see what himself tells us on this subject.

In his famous harangue against Karlstadt and the image breakers, delivered from the pulpit of the church of All

\* Epist. Sylvio Egrano, 2 Feb., 1519.

† Epist. Spalatino, 12 Feb., 1519. See Audin, *Life of Luther*, p. 91, and D'Aubigné, vol. ii, p. 15-16.

‡ Epist. i, p. 234.

§ D'Aubigné, vol. ii, p. 128.

Saints at Wittenberg, he plainly says that, if his recreant disciples will not take his advice, "he will not hesitate to retract every thing he had either taught or written, and leave them;" and he adds emphatically: "This I tell you once for all."\* In an abridged confession of faith, which he drew up for his partisans, he says in a vaunting tone: "I abolished the elevation of the host, to spite the Pope; and I had retained it so long to spite Karlstadt."† In the new form of service, which he composed as a substitute for the Mass, he says in a similar spirit: "If a council were to order the communion to be taken in both kinds, he and his would only take it in one or none; and would, moreover, curse all those who should, in conformity with this decree of the council, communicate in both kinds."‡—Could the man be sincere who openly boasted of being governed by such motives?

We might continue to discuss the question of his sincerity, by showing how he said one thing to Cardinal Cajetan, and in the diet of Worms in 1521, and other things precisely contradictory to his friends, at the same time: how, before Cajetan, he appealed first to the universities,§ then to the Pope, better informed,|| and subsequently to a general council:¶ and how, when all these tribunals had decided against him, he would abide by none of their decisions, his reiterated solemn promises to the contrary notwithstanding! Did the Spirit of God direct him in all these tortuous windings of artful policy? Do they manifest aught of the uprightness of a boasted apostle? Do they not rather bespeak the wily heresiarch—an Arius, a Nestorius, or a Pelagius?

We say nothing at present of his consistency: we speak only of his sincerity and common honesty. No one has ever yet been found to praise his consistency. He was, confess-

\* "Non dubitabo funem reducere, et omnium quæ aut scripsi aut docui palinodiam canere: hoc vobis dictum esto." Sermo docens abusus non manibus, etc.

† Confessio Parva.

‡ Forma Missæ.

§ D'Aubigné, vol. i, p. 357.

|| Ibid., vol. i, p. 376.

¶ Ibid., vol. i, p. 389, and again, vol. ii, p. 134.

edly, a mere creature of impulse and of passion, constant in nothing but in his hatred of the Pope and of the Catholic Church. His inconsistencies would fill a volume, and a mere enumeration of them would swell this chapter to an unwarrantable length.\*

But there is one incident in the private life of Luther too curious to be passed over in silence. We give it in the words of M. Audin, with his references to contemporary historians:

"After the labors of the day, he would walk with Catharine"—the nun whom he had sacrilegiously wedded—"in the little garden of the convent, near the ponds in which colored fish were disporting; and he loved to explain to her the wonders of the creation, and the goodness of Him who had made it with His hands. One evening the stars sparkled with unwonted brightness, and the heavens appeared to be on fire. 'Behold what splendor those luminous points emit,' said Catharine to Luther. Luther raised his eyes. 'What glorious light,' said he: 'IT SHINES NOT FOR US.' 'Why not?' replied Bora; 'have we lost our title to the kingdom of heaven?' Luther sighed—'Perhaps so,' said he, 'because we have abandoned our state.' 'We ought to return to it, then,' said Catharine. 'IT IS TOO LATE—THE CAR IS SUNK TOO DEEPLY,' added the doctor. The conversation dropped."†

We may here be pardoned for making a digression, to relate a somewhat analogous incident of Melancthon, Luther's bosom friend and cherished disciple. Luther was wont to flatter him immoderately, and the grateful disciple repaid him with interest in the same gilded coin. When the latter had finished his Scholia—or short commentaries—on the Epistles of St. Paul, Luther said to him, after having read the work: "What matter is it whether it pleases you or not, if it pleases me? I tell you that the commentaries of Origen and Jerome, compared with yours, are nothing but absurdities."‡ Melancthon, too, had his misgivings.

---

\* Those who may be curious to investigate this subject still further will find abundant facts in Audin's Life of Luther. We direct the attention of such to the following pages: 81, 82, 85, 94, 95, 102, 110, 238, 239, 240, 291, 312, 354, 397, 398, 410, 430, 472, 511, etc., etc.

† Georg Joanneck—Norma Vitæ. Kraus—Ovicul. part ii, fol. 39. Apud Audin, p. 382.

‡ Apud Audin, p. 445.

"He recalled to his mind the image of his old father, George Schwartzerde,† the smith, whose lively faith made him rise often at night to offer up his prayer to God. He thought of the last prayer of his dying mother, who, raising her hands towards him, said: 'My son, it is for the last time you see your mother. I am about to die: your turn will one day come, when you must render an account of your actions to your Judge. You know that I was a Catholic, and that you have induced me to abandon the religion of my fathers. Tell me now, for God's sake, in what religion I ought to die.' Melancthon answered: 'Mother, the new doctrine is the more convenient; the other is the more secure.'"‡ But the gentle and wavering Melancthon was kept in error by the fascination of his imperious master Luther, who, serpent-like, had coiled himself around his very heart-strings, and held him captive.

Luther's intellectual attainments were of a high order. As a popular orator, few surpassed him whether in ancient or in modern times. Nothing could withstand the foamy torrent of his eloquence, or resist the effect of his withering invective:

"When he preached, the people listened with trembling expectation to the words which fell from his lips. His eye, which seemed to revolve in a fiery orbit—his large and seer-like forehead—his animated figure, especially when much excited—his threatening gesture, his loud voice which thundered on the ear—the spirit of inspiration with which he seemed possessed—all awakened either terror, or ecstatic admiration in his auditory."‡

An excellent judge, the great Frederick Von Schlegel, passes the following opinion on his mental powers.

"In the first place, it is evident of itself that a man who accomplished so mighty a revolution in the human mind, and in his age, could have been endowed with no common powers of intellect, and no ordinary strength of character. Even his writings display an astonishing boldness and energy of thought, united with a spirit of impetuous, passionate, and convulsive

\* Schwarzerde means literally *black earth*.

† Ægidius Albertinus im 4. Theil des Deutschen Lust-Hauses, vol. v p. 143.—Apud Audin, p. 447, note.

‡ Audin, p. 225.

enthusiasm. The latter qualities are indeed not very compatible with a prudent, enlightened, and dispassionate judgment.”\*

His indefatigable industry and untiring energy brought out all his mental resources. He was restless and uneasy in mind and heart: his spirit could never be still, after it had lost the peace it once possessed in the bosom of the Catholic Church. His mind was not elevated or refined; it could not appreciate the beauties of art in Rome, which he visited during the splendid pontificate of Leo X. He seems to have gleaned nothing else from his journey to the eternal city but a few “house-wife stories or mendacious anecdotes.”†

Much has been said of his courage, and of his utter disregard of danger. That he was bold and daring, we do not pretend to deny. It however required but little courage to be bold in his interview with Cardinal Cajetan, or at the diet of Worms in 1521. With the safe-conduct of the emperor, and the certain protection of the powerful elector of Saxony, he had little to apprehend. Besides, any man might become courageous, at least at times, who had a powerful party to sustain him in every thing. Luther was certainly most courageous where there was least danger. He is altogether a different character at the diet of Worms, and at Wittenberg. He could hurl defiance at Popes, emperors, and princes, when these were far off, and he was out of their reach: but if he had any thing to fear from them, the scene changed altogether. He then became as obsequious and crouching, as he had before been bold and reckless.

How meanly sycophantic was he on all occasions to the elector of Saxony! We will give one instance of this. When Henry VIII., of England, complained to the elector of Luther’s outrageous insults to his royal majesty, the elector barely intimated the fact in a very mild and indirect way to the reformer, without even insinuating the propriety of the latter making any

---

\* Philosophy of History, vol. ii, p. 204.

† See Audin, p. 135, for facts under this head.

reparation. Luther at once seized his pen, and indited the following singular amende honorable. "Most serene king! most illustrious prince! I should be afraid to address your majesty, when I remember how much I must have offended you in the book which, under the influence of bad advice, rather than of my own feelings, I published against you, through pride and vanity. . . . I blush now, and scarcely dare to raise my eyes to you—I, who, by means of these workers of iniquity, have not feared to insult so great a prince—I, who am a worm and corruption, and who only merit contempt and disdain. . . . If your majesty thinks proper that, in another work, I should recall my words, and glorify your name, vouchsafe to transmit to me your orders. I am ready and full of good will,"\* etc. In fact, as we shall hereafter prove, Luther was indebted, in a great measure, to his sycophancy to princes for the success of his pretended Reformation†.

His passions were violent, and he seems to have made little effort to govern them. His violence, in fact, often drove him to the very verge of insanity. His cherished disciple, Melancthon, deplored his furious outbursts of temper. "I tremble when I think of the passions of Luther: they yield not in violence to the passions of Hercules."‡ The weak and timid disciple had reason to tremble; for he testifies that Luther occasionally inflicted on him personal chastisement.§

If he thus treated his most intimate friends, what are we to suppose his conduct was towards his opponents and enemies?

\* Opp. Lutheri, Tom. ix, p. 234. Cochläus, p. 156, Ulenberg, p. 502. See Audin, p. 300.

† Mr. Hallam, speaking of this letter of apology addressed by Luther to Henry VIII, says: "Among the many strange things which Luther said and wrote, I know not one more extravagant than this letter, which almost justifies the supposition that there was a vein of insanity in his very remarkable character."—Constitutional History of England, Harper's edition, 1857; p. 45, note.

‡ Melancthon Epist. ad Theodorum.

§ "Ab ipso colaphos accepi."—Epist. ad eundem.

In his conferences with Cajetan and Miltitz, and in his letter to Leo X., as well as in his famous speech at Worms, he acknowledged the violence of his writings: Still, instead of correcting this fault, it seems to have grown with his growth. Witness the manner in which he replies to Tetzl. "It seems to me, at the sound of these invectives, that I hear a great ass braying at me. I rejoice at it, and should be sorry that such people should call me a good Christian."\*

He exhausts all the epithets of the coarsest ribaldry against his opponents, no matter how respectable these may have been. We can not pollute our pages with a tithe of his foul language. Behold the spirit that breathes in the following passage, in which he speaks of his theological antagonist Emser: "After a little time I will pray against him; I will beseech God to render to him according to his works: it is better that he should perish, than that he should continue to blaspheme Christ. I do not wish you to pray for this wretch; pray for us alone."† His adversaries are full of devils: if they die, the devil has strangled them; "one foams at the mouth; another has the horns and tail of Satan. This one is clad as Antichrist; that man changed into a block. Oftentimes the same personage, in the same page, is travestied as a mule, a camel, an owl, and a mole."‡

What are we to think, for instance, of the spirit of the following language, addressed to an assembly of his own disciples!

"My brethren, be submissive, and communicate only under one kind. If you do what I say to you, I will be to you a good master; I will be to you a father, brother, friend. I will obtain graces and privileges from his majesty for you. If you disobey me, I declare that I will become your enemy, and do all the mischief possible to this city."§

Volumes might be filled with extracts from Luther's writings, replete with the coarsest vulgarity and the grossest

\* Luth. Opp. Leipsic, xvii, 132.

† Epist. ad Nicholas Hausman, 26 April, 1520.

‡ Audin., p. 118.

§ Table Talk, p. 376.

obscenity: the specimens we have given are among the mildest and least objectionable.\*

It is usual to excuse this coarseness of Luther by the spirit of the age in which he lived. This is scarcely a valid apology for one, who set himself up as a reformer of religion and of morals, and who claimed a divine commission to establish a new system of doctrine. Besides, we look in vain for any such examples of vulgarity among his chief opponents in the Catholic Church: Emser, Eck, Cajetan, Erasmus, and the great Leo X., were far too refined to employ any such vulgar weapons. The reformers seemed to claim a special privilege in this way. Let us exhibit a few specimens of the manner in which some of those rival champions of reform, who differed from Luther in their doctrinal views, spoke of the Saxon reformer. They returned railing for railing.†

"This man," says one of his contemporary reformers, "is absolutely mad. He never ceases to combat truth against all justice, even against the cry of his own conscience."‡ "He is puffed up," says another, "with pride and arrogance, and is seduced by Satan."§ "Yes," re-echoes another, "the devil is master of Luther to such a degree as to make one believe that he wishes to gain entire possession of him."||

The same brother reformer adds: "that he was possessed not by one, but by a whole troop of devils;"¶ and that "he wrote all his works by the impulse and the dictation of the

\* For more instances consult the following pages of Audin, 136, 163, 235, 237, 239, 240, 248, 273, 285, 287, 288, 299, etc., etc.

† It was well for such men as these to turn reformers, and to cry out against the holy Catholic Church! There was certainly great need of reformation, not of the Church, but of the coarse hypocrites who, reeking with vice and impurity, lifted up their voices to calumniate better men than themselves—a device to avert suspicion from their own conduct!

‡ Hospinian.

§ Ecolampadius.

|| Zuingle.

¶ Non obsessum ab uno spiritu, sed occupatum a caterva dæmonum.—*Contra Lutherum*. Apud Audin, p. 188.



devil, with whom he had dealings, and who in the struggle seemed to have thrown him by victorious arguments.”\*

This last charge was not without foundation. Luther himself relates his “conference with the devil” in full, and acknowledges, at the close of it, that he was unable to answer the arguments of Satan!† The devil, as was quite natural, argued against the lawfulness of private Masses, which Luther feebly defended: and so convincing were the reasons of his satanical majesty, that Luther wrote to his intimate friend Melancthon immediately after: “I will not again celebrate private Masses forever.”‡ And he faithfully kept his promise! It was a favorite saying of his that, “unless we have the devil hanging about our necks, we are but pitiful speculative theologians!”§

Can we wonder, then, at this compliment paid him by his brother Protestants of the church of Zurich: “But how strangely does this fellow let himself be carried away by his devils! How disgusting is his language, and how full are his words of the devil of hell!”||

If these sayings are hard, it is surely not our fault; Luther bore similar testimony of himself, and of his brother Protestants, who happened to differ from him; and these did but retort on him similar compliments! We are but the humble witnesses and historians of the conflict. The reformers are certainly unexceptionable witnesses of the characters of one

\* *Contra Confessionem Lutheri*, p. 61. For more testimonies of the kind, see Note A. at the end of this volume.

† In his treatise *De Missâ privatâ*. See also Note B. at the end of the present volume, where we will give the Satanic interview in full. It is a document as curious as it is important, in forming an estimate of Luther's character.

‡ “Sed et ego amplius non faciam missam privatam in æternum.”—*Ad Melancthon*. Aug. 1, 1521.

§ “Nisi diabolum habemus collo affixum, nihil nisi speculativi theologi sumus.”—*Colloquia Mensalia*, fol. 23. *Apud Audin*, i, 366. Turnbull's translation, two vols. 8vo, London.

|| Church of Zurich—*Contra Confess. Lutheri*.

another. Is it likely that God selected such instruments to reform His church?

Luther's standard of morality was about as high as that of his good breeding. St. Paul tells us that a Christian's "conversation is in heaven;"\* Luther's, on the contrary, was not only earthly, but often immoral and revolting in the extreme. He discussed, in all their most disgusting details, subjects which St. Paul would not have so much as "named among Christians."† His famous "Table Talk" is full of such specimens of the new gospel decency. Wine and women, the Pope and the devil, are the principal subjects of which the reformer liked to treat, when alone with his intimate friends, in private and unreserved conversation. For fifteen years—from 1525 to 1540—he usually passed the evenings at the Black Eagle tavern of Wittenburg, where he met and conversed, over the ale-jug, with his bosom friends, Melancthon, Amsdorf, Aurifaber, Justus Jonas, Lange, Link, and Staupitz.

His disciples carefully collected and published these conversations of their "beloved master," as so many precious oracles from heaven, delivered by the mouth of the new apostle. Erasmus Albert, one of them, tells us, in a work against Karlstadt, that "these table discourses of the doctor are better than any sermons;" and Frederick Mecum, another early Lutheran, calls them "affecting conversations, which ought to be diffused among the people."‡ The first editions of the work were published in German and in Latin, by Mathesius, Peter Rebstock, and Aurifaber, all zealous disciples of the reformer.§ If there was any indiscretion in thus revealing to the world the secret conversations of this "ale-pope of the Black Eagle" with his boon companions, *their*

---

\* Philippians, iii: 20.

† Ephes. v: 3.

‡ Apud Audin, p. 386.

§ The first edition was that of Eisleben, Luther's birth-place, in 1566, twenty years after his death. It was speedily followed by others, at Frankfurt on the Oder in 1567 and 1571; at Jena in 1591; at Leipsic in 1603 and 1700; at Dresden and again at Leipsic in 1723.

zeal is alone to blame for the exposure. The Table Talk, or *Tisch Reden*, as it is called in German, revealing as it does the heart of Luther in his most unguarded moments, is perhaps the best key to his real character.\*

We will not soil our pages with extracts from the Table Talk, revealing the moral turpitude of Luther. Those who may doubt the truth of the picture we have drawn, or who may feel a curiosity in such matters, are referred to the work itself—a ponderous folio of 1350 pages, besides an index, which alone would make a volume of considerable size.† Luther's immorality was not, however, confined to private conversations at the Black Eagle: he unblushingly and sacrilegiously exhibited it in the very sanctuary of God's holy temple. His Sermon on Matrimony, delivered in the German language, from the pulpit of the public church of All Saints at Wittenburg, enters into the most revolting details upon a most delicate subject. The perusal of that sermon, even in the French language—under the veil of which the translator of M. Audin has wisely thought proper to leave it partially concealed—is enough to raise a blush on the cheek of modesty! He preached this sermon in 1521, immediately after his return from the Castle of the Wartburg, where he had held his famous “conference with the devil;” and it is worthy of such a master, if indeed the demon himself, who is said to have little taste for such matters, would not have blushed at the obscenity of his wanton disciple!

---

\* Never, perhaps, was there a better or more striking illustration of the old Latin adage, in vino veritas—in wine there is truth—than in these unguarded and confidential conversations between Luther and his intimate friends. Though concealment was no characteristic element of Luther's character, even in his more sober moments, yet the whole depths of his heart were more fully unveiled over his cups, in which he appears to have indulged more and more as he advanced in years. Verily, he had now fully given up all those practices of penitential austerity concerning which he had been so scrupulous while a Catholic!

† M. Audin publishes copious extracts from the work, p. 387, seqq.

We may as well remark here, that it was in this same church, about the same time, that Luther delivered the withering invective against Karlstadt and some other ultra reformers, who had torn down or defaced the statues and paintings of the church, during his absence at the Wartburg. The following extract from this oration contains a boast characteristic of Luther: "I have done more mischief to the Pope, even while I slept, or was drinking beer with Philip and Amsdorf, than all the princes and emperors put together!"\*

We shudder while we record the following horrid blasphemies, taken from his Table Talk; and we should have refrained from publishing them, had he not set himself up as a reformer of God's Church, and in that garb seduced many from the faith. "May the name of the Pope be d——d: may his reign be abolished; may his will be restrained! If I thought that God did not hear my prayer, I would address the devil."† Again: "I owe more to my dear Catharine and to Philip, than to God himself."‡ Finally: "God has made many mistakes. I would have given him good advice had I assisted at the creation. I would have made the sun shine incessantly; the day would have been without end."§ Could human wickedness or temerity have gone further than this?||

---

\* Opp. Lutheri, Tom. vii. Chytr. Chron. Sax. p. 247.

† Table Talk, p. 213, Edit. Eisleben.

‡ Ibid., p. 124.

§ Id. Ed. Frank. part ii, fol. 20.

|| In his Standard Library, Bohn publishes (in one volume 12mo, pp. 374, London, 1857,) what purports to be Luther's Table Talk. We are indebted for a copy of this production to our friend James Slevin, Esq., of Philadelphia. It is said to be a reproduction of a translation made about the middle of the seventeenth century by one Captain Henry Bell, an Englishman, who tells us a most marvellous story concerning "the miraculous preserving of Dr. Martin Luther's book, entitled Colloquia Mensalia, or his Divine Discourses at his Table, etc." According to the account of this gallant romancer, he by chance found in Germany a copy of the precious book hidden away in a deep hole in the ground, this being the only copy that was left, all the rest having been burned by order of the Pope and the emperor! He reverently carried the book to England; and when he was dictating in the translation, a nocturnal apparition frightened him into com

It is not a little remarkable, that from the date of his conference with the devil, Luther's moral career was constantly downward; until at last he reached the lowest grade of infamy, and became utterly steeped in vice. How strongly does his reckless conduct, after this period, contrast with his vigils, long prayers, and fasts, while an humble monk in the Catholic Church! He himself draws the contrast in his own forcible manner.

He tells us that while a Catholic, "he passed his life in austerities, in watchings, in fasts and praying, in poverty, chastity and obedience."\* When he had abandoned Catholicity, he says of himself, that he was no longer able to resist the vilest propensities,† and that, "as it did not depend upon him not to be a man, so neither did it depend upon him to be without a woman."‡ His immorality was generally known, and he himself often acknowledged it. "He was," says Sleidan, a Protestant historian of the time, "so well aware of his immorality, as we are informed by his favorite disciple (Melancthon,) that he wished they would remove him from the office of preaching."§ In his Table Talk, he often avowed

---

mencing the task, causing him "to fall into an extreme sweat!" See his narrative in full, prefixed to Bohn's edition.

He does not choose to tell us whether the apparition was "white or black"—a question which had seriously puzzled more than one reformer. Verily, some people are prepared to believe almost any absurdity, provided it only tally with their prejudices, and almost any marvel, provided it do not point in the direction of the truth. We have never seen a more stupid or clumsy imposture than this whole attempt to palm off on the public the dreams of a miserable, and it would seem, disreputable adventurer; and we are surprised that such a man as William Hazlitt should have lent it his countenance. The book itself is a bad abridgment of Luther's Table Talk, with the more objectionable portions carefully left out. Only think of publishing the immense folio of 1350 pages in a small 12mo volume! Yet there is no indication of its abridgment.

\* Tom. v, Opp. Commentar. in c. i ad Galatas v, 14.

† "Carnis meæ indomitæ uror magnis ignibus, carne, libidine." Apud Audin, p. 355.

‡ Opp. Tom. v, fol. 119. Sermo de Matrimonio.

§ Sleidan, B. ii, An. 1520.

the base passions which raged within him; but in language much too gross for our pages. He sometimes complained, that "the Wittenbergers who supply all the monks with wives, will not give me one."\*

Though he had made a solemn vow of chastity; and though the Holy Scriptures command us to fulfill our vows;† yet he married Catharine Bora, a nun bound by similar sacred engagements!‡ He hesitated long before he took this step, and had some conscientious twitchings even while taking it: his conscience did not become wholly seared, until some time afterwards! While at the Wartburg in 1521—a little before his satanical interview—he uttered the following exclamation of horror, on being shown some theses of his recreant dis-

\* See Meyer—Ehren Gedachtniss, fol. 26.

† Psalm lxxv: 12.

‡ The Protestant historian of Germany, Wolfgang Menzel, speaking of Luther's marriage, says: "Luther, in defiance of the ancient prophecy, that antichrist would spring from the union of a monk and nun, wedded (A. D. 1525,) the beautiful young nun Catharine Von Bora, who brought him several children." Vol. ii, p. 249, edit. Bohn, London, 1853. He was not the first apostate priest who married at the period of the Reformation; Karlstadt, Bernhard, and others had preceded him in the reformatory race matrimonial. Ibid., p. 232.

As we shall have occasion to quote Menzel frequently hereafter, we may as well remark here, that though occasionally candid in his statement of facts, he takes little pains to disguise his prejudice against the Catholic Church; which circumstance renders his testimony the more unexceptionable whenever it is favorable to the Church. One can hardly have patience while reading the flippant and stupid calumnies, which he heaps together on p. 218, seqq., of this second volume, in reference to the character of the Popes who preceded Leo X., the sale of indulgences, and the first movements of the Reformation in Germany. He assigns no authority whatever for his calumnious and almost incredible statements. Among other things, for instance, he says that the ignorance of the clergy "was countenanced by the Popes, who expressly decreed that out of ten ecclesiastics only one was to study!" P. 220. The Popes had always decreed precisely the contrary, as every one knows who has read history. This very Pontiff, Leo X., had enacted, that "thenceforth none should be raised to the priesthood but men of ripe years, of exemplary conduct, and who *had gone through a long course of study.*" See Audin, vol. i, p. 79, London edition.

ciple, Karlstadt, in which this man allowed wives to priests and monks—"Good heaven! will our Wittenburg friends allow wives even to monks! Ah! at least they will not make *me* take a wife."\* And again he says: "The friars have of their own accord chosen a life of celibacy; they are therefore not at liberty to withdraw from the obligations they have laid themselves under."† Three years later, in 1524, he said: "God may change my purpose, if such be his pleasure; but at present I have no thought of taking a wife."‡

And yet, but a few short weeks elapsed before he espoused Catharine Bora! That he had some misgivings on the occasion, would appear from these words of his letter to an intimate friend, Wenceslaus Link—"Away with your scruples: let the Lord be glorified. I have my little Catharine. I belong to Bora, and am dead to the world"§—and to conscience. To Koeppe, another boon companion, he wrote: "You know well what has happened to me. I am caught in the snares of a woman. God must have been angry with me and with the world."|| Luther at first felt the degradation to which he had stooped, in violating his sacred vows. In a letter to his intimate friend Spalatin, immediately after his marriage, he says: "That he had made himself so vile and contemptible by these nuptials, that he hopes all the angels will laugh, and all the demons weep!"¶ Still this feeling soon gave way to a conviction, which he expressed in a confidential letter to another friend, "That God himself had inspired him with the thought of marrying that nun, Catharine de Bora!"\*\* Could inconsistency and infatuation go further than this?

\* At mihi non obtrudent uxorem. Lib. Epist. ii, p. 40. D'Aubigné iii, 26. Audin, vol. i, p. 337. † Ibid., p. 34; D'Aubigné, ib., p. 26, 27.

‡ Epist. ii, p. 570, 30th Nov., 1524.

§ Epist. Tom. ii, p. 245. Wittenb. edit. Seckendorf, l. i, s. 63, clxxxii.

|| Ibid. Tom. ii, p. 903. Edit. Altenb.

¶ Epistola Spalatino. "Sic me vilem et contemptum his nuptiis feci, ut angelos ridere, et dæmones flere sperem." \*\* Epist. Wenceslao Link.

The whole world was astounded, or at least greatly shocked at this conduct of the Saxon reformer. The Catholics viewed it as open sacrilege: many Protestants were saddened and scandalized. Among these was Melancthon, who deplored this conduct of his master in a letter to Camerarius; but with singular inconsistency adds: "Wo, however, to him who would reject the doctrine, on account of the sins of the teacher!" The accomplished, but wavering Erasmus, viewed it but as another proof of his caustic remark, "That the tragedy of the Reformation ever terminated in the comedy of marriage." In a letter written on the occasion, he says: "This is a singular occurrence; Luther has thrown off the philosopher's cloak, and has just married a young woman of twenty-six—handsome, well-made, and of a good family, but who has no dowry, and who for some time had ceased to be a vestal. The nuptials were most auspicious; for a few days after the hymeneal songs were sung, the bride was delivered! Luther revels, while a hundred thousand peasants descend to the tomb!"\* The scandalous circumstance here developed may perhaps explain Luther's haste in the matter.

All Germany was aroused by the tidings of Luther's marriage. His opponents, as well as those who were indifferent,

---

\* Epist. Danieli Manichs Ulmensi. Oct. 6, 1525. This letter of Erasmus has given rise to an animated controversy between the friends and opponents of Luther. Those who may wish to see both sides, are referred to Audin, p. 362, seqq. There seems to be little doubt, that the caustic censure of Erasmus had a basis in truth. See also Bayle's Dictionary, article Luther. The alleged retraction by Erasmus is believed by many to have been a forgery. If Froben, who collected and published the Epistles of Erasmus, omitted the original passage in his letter to Daniel Ulm criminating Luther, he would scarcely have scrupled to interpolate this passage containing the alleged retraction. Besides, Luther's immorality was well known, and not concealed even by himself. His conversation was habitually such as to indicate a corrupt heart. He had, moreover, a son *Andrew*, as he testifies in his Table Talk, though his name is not given in the list of his children furnished elsewhere, which is very suspicious. Finally, he speaks of an illegitimate child of his wife Catharine. See Audin, Ibid.



laughed at his expense through all the notes of the gamut. Sonnets, epigrams, satires, epithalamia, and caricatures, poured in on his devoted head, like a hail storm, from every quarter. Among these, the best perhaps were those of Doctors Emser and Wimpina. The former extemporized a nuptial song, or epithalamium, in Latin verse, and set it to music: "Farewell! cowl, prior, guardian, abbot: adieu to all vows: adieu to matins and prayers, fear and shame: adieu to conscience!"\* The latter, in a wood-cut caricature, exhibited, in withering and ludicrous contrast, the marriage of Luther and the divine injunction: "Vow ye, and pay to the Lord your God"—Vovete, et reddite Domino Deo tuo.†

Luther seems to have retired for a time from the pitiless peltings of the storm—"dead to the world, with his little Catharine"—but he again emerged from solitude, more reckless and violent than ever. As Erasmus remarked, "marriage had not tamed him!" Indeed, it would seem that "his little Catharine" gave him no *little* trouble and annoyance. She sometimes played the part of the scold and the vixen. He used to call her—after the honey-moon, of course—"my master Ketha."‡—Poor man!

Before he left the Catholic Church, he was temperate and abstemious: during the last twenty-one years of his life—from his marriage in 1525 to his death in 1546—he was much given to the luxuries of the table, and drank beer copiously, if not to excess. Maimbourg and others tell us, that

\* Cuculla, vale, capa!  
 Vale, prior, custos, abba!  
 Cum obedientia,  
 Cum jubilo.  
 Ite vota, preces, horæ,  
 Vale timor cum pudore:  
 Vale conscientia!

*Cochlæus in Act. Lutheri, fol. 118.*

† Psalm lxxv: 12; Prot. vers. lxxvi: 12. The only answer Luther made to Wimpina, was this: "Let the sow grunt!" ‡ "Dominus meus Ketha."

he lost the use of reason at many of the sumptuous banquets, in which he was wont to revel with his intimate friends; and Seckendorf, his warmest admirer, admits that "he used food and drink joyfully, and indulged in jokes,"\* even on the eve of his death. In fact, so little was he in the habit of restraining his passions, or of concealing his vices, that they all stood out in bold relief,—strong even in death!

His death was in every respect worthy of the life he had habitually led since he had turned reformer. His last words contained a refusal to retract his errors, and a declaration that he wished to die as he had lived! We will give a few incidents connected with his last moments. "I am ready to die," he said, "whenever it shall please God my Saviour; but I would wish to live till Pentecost, that I might stigmatize before the whole world this Roman beast, whom they call the Pope, and with him his kingdom." His pains becoming very acute, he said one day to his nurse: "I wish there was a Turk here to kill me." Hear how he prays, while suffering: "My sins—death, the devil—give me no rest! What other consolation have I but thy grace, O God! Ah! let it not abandon the most miserable of men, the greatest of sinners!" Witness again the spirit of the following characteristic prayer, in which the supplication for mercy is blended with hatred of his enemies: "O my God! how I would wish that Erasmus and the Sacramentarians did for a moment experience the pains that I suffer: then I would become a prophet and foretell their conversion."†

After the sumptuous feast alluded to above, he gave vent to his humor in the following strain, the subject of which is the devil—his usual hobby: "My dear friends, we can not die, till we have caught hold of Lucifer by the tail! I saw his back yesterday from the castle turrets."‡

---

\* "*Cibo et potu hilariter usus est; et facetiis indulsit.*" Seckendorf, *Commentar. de Lutheranism.*

† For more facts of a similar kind, see Audin, p. 482, seqq.

‡ Rareburgius, in his MS. Seckendorf, lib. iii, § 36, cxxxiv.

The discourse subsequently turned on the study of the Scriptures, and Luther made the following declaration, which is valuable as a death-bed confession. "It is no trifle to understand the Scriptures. Five years' hard labor will be required to understand Virgil's Georgics: twenty years' experience to be master of Cicero's Epistles: and a hundred years' intercourse with the prophets Elias, Eliseus, John the Baptist, Christ, and the apostles, to know the Scriptures!—Alas! poor human nature!"\* And yet the last twenty-nine years of his life had been devoted to the promulgation of the cardinal principle of his new religion, that every one was competent to understand the Scriptures by his own private judgment! Well may *we* exclaim—"Alas! poor human nature!"

Such was, or rather became, Martin Luther, *after* he had left the holy Catholic Church! Compare his character then with what it was before that event; and then apply D'Aubigné's test given above, and the conclusion is irresistible: that he was not a chosen instrument in the hands of God for reforming the Church, which "He had purchased with His blood."† Before he left the Church, he was, as we have seen, humble, patient, pious, devoted, chaste, scrupulous; afterwards, he was, in every one of these particulars, directly the reverse. Does God choose such instruments to do his work? Was Moses, was Aaron, were the apostles such characters? Luther, like the apostles, forsooth! They were humble, chaste, patient, temperate, and modest: he was proud, immoral, impatient, and wholly shameless. They had a mission from God, and proved it by miracles: he had not the one, nor did he claim the other; though challenged on the subject, both by the Zuinglians and by the Anabaptists.‡ Therefore

---

\* Florimond Remond, b. iii, c. ii, fol. 287. Laign, vita Lutheri, fol. 4.

† Acts xx : 28.

‡ See Audin, p. 239. Stübner, an Anabaptist, asked him to produce his miracles. He was silent, though a little before, he had made the very same challenge to Karlstadt, and renewed it afterwards to the Zuinglians!

God did not send him—and all of D'Aubigné's canting theory falls of itself to the ground. What must the *lock* of the Reformation be, if Luther's personal character be the *key*, which suits its internal structure?

It would be easy to show, by unquestionable evidence, that the other reformers were not a whit better than Luther. We have seen already, what testimony they mutually bore to the character of one another; and we shall probably have occasion to recur to the subject in the sequel of our essay:

"The historian, Hume, has truly characterized the reformers as 'fanatics and bigots;' but with no less justice might he have added, that they were (with one exception *perhaps*)\* the coarsest hypocrites:† men, who, while professing the most high-flown sanctity in their writings, were in their conduct, brutal, selfish, and unrestrainable; who, though pretending, in matters of faith, to adopt reason as their guide, were in all things else, the slaves of the most vulgar superstition; and who, with the boasted right of private judgment forever on their lips, passed their lives in a course of mutual re- crimination and persecution; and transmitted the same warfare as an heirloom to their descendants. Yet, 'these be thy Gods,' O Protestantism!—these the coarse idols which heresy has set up in the niches of the saints and fathers of old, and whose names, like those of all former such idols, are worn like brands upon the foreheads of their worshipers."‡

Whoever will read attentively the veridical history of the Reformation, will admit the truth of this picture drawn by the great Irish bard.

\* Melancthon.

† Bucer admits the justice of this reproach. Epist. ad Calvin.

‡ "Travels of an Irish Gentleman," etc., p. 200, 201. Doyle, New York, 1835.

# PART II.

## CAUSES AND MANNER OF THE REFORMATION.

---

### CHAPTER II.

#### CHARACTER OF THE REFORMATION—THEORY OF D'AUBIGNE EXAMINÉD.

The question stated—D'Aubigné's opinion—Mother and daughter—Argumentum ad hominem—Jumping at a conclusion—Second causes—Why Germany was converted—Why Italy and Spain were not—Luther and Mohammed—Reasoning by contraries—Why France continued Catholic.

WE have seen what was the character of the chief instruments who brought about the Reformation in Germany; we are now to examine what was the character of the work itself, and how it was accomplished. Were the reasons which were assigned, as the principal motives for this alleged reform in religion, sufficient to justify it, according to the judgment of impartial men? Were the means employed for bringing it about such as would lead us to believe, that it was really a change for the better; and were they such as God would or could have approved and sanctioned? Finally, weighing these motives and these means, and making all due allowance for the condition of the times, was there any thing very remarkable in the rapid progress of the Reformation itself? We will endeavor to answer these questions in the following chapters.

D'Aubigné, and those who concur with him, profess to believe, or at least endeavor to make others believe, that the Reformation was not only sanctioned by God, but that it was directly His work. He says:

“Christianity and the Reformation are, indeed, the same revolution, but working at different periods, and in dissimilar circumstances. They differ in secondary features—they are alike in their first lines, and leading charac-

teristics. The one is the reappearance of the other. The former closes the old order of things—the latter begins the new. Between them is the middle age. One is the parent of the other; and if the daughter is in some respects inferior, she has, in others, characters altogether peculiar to herself”\*

In opposition to this flattering theory, we will endeavor to prove that the Reformation differs from Christianity, not only “in secondary features,” but also “in its first lines and leading characteristics;” and that, if the former was the daughter of the latter, she was a most recreant and degenerate daughter truly, with scarcely one lineament in common with her parent. Verily, she had “characters altogether peculiar to herself,” and she was not only “in some respects,” but in almost every thing, not only “inferior” to, but the direct opposite, of her alleged parent!

According to our author, one of these “characters of the Reformation peculiar to itself,” was “the suddenness of its action.” He illustrates the rapidity with which the Reformation was established, by the figure employed by our blessed Saviour to denote the suddenness of His second coming: “As the lightning cometh forth from the west and shineth to the east, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” “Christianity,” he says, “was one of those revolutions, which was slowly and gradually prepared;” the Reformation, on the contrary, was instantaneous in its effect:—“A monk speaks, and in half of Europe the power and glory [of the Church of Rome] crumbles in the dust!”† This rapidity he views as a certain evidence, that the Reformation was assuredly the work of God. For “how could an entire people—how could so many nations, have so rapidly performed so difficult a work? How could such an act of critical judgment [on the necessity and measure of the reform] kindle the enthusiasm indispensable to great, and especially to sudden revolutions? But the Reformation was a work of a very different kind; and this, its history will prove. It was the pouring forth anew of that life which Christianity had brought into the world.”‡

---

\* D'Aubingé, Preface, p. iv.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

We trust to make it appear in the sequel, that the rapidity with which the Reformation was diffused, was the result of the pouring forth of a different spirit altogether. Meantime we would beg leave to ask D'Aubigné to answer this plain argument, specially adapted to the case as he puts it: if the suddenness of the Reformation be a proof that it was brought about by the "pouring forth anew of that life which Christianity had brought into the world;" would not the contrary feature of Christianity—its gradual operation\*—be a conclusive evidence, that this latter system was not the work of God? And if this argument be not valid, what truth is there in D'Aubigné's entire theory? Would not his reasoning, if reduced to the strict laws of logic, rather prove, on the contrary, if it proved any thing, that the Reformation, differing avowedly as it does in an essential feature from Christianity, was not effected by the agency of the Holy Spirit, but was the mere result of violent human passions, which usually bring about sudden revolutions, both in the religious and in the social system?

It is curious to trace the further development of his favorite theory.

"Two considerations will account for the rapidity and extent of this revolution. One of these must be sought in God, the other among men. The impulse was given by an unseen hand of power, and the change which took place was the work of God. This will be the conclusion arrived at by every one who considers the subject with impartiality and attention, and does not rest in a superficial view. But the historian has a further office to perform—God acts by second causes. Many circumstances, which have often escaped observation, gradually prepared men for the great transformation of the sixteenth century, so that the human mind was ripe when the hour of its emancipation arrived."†

Now, we have given no little attention to the subject, and we claim at least as much impartiality as our historian of "the great Reformation;" and yet, with the facts of history before us, we can arrive at no such conclusion, but have

---

\* This we merely suppose with D'Aubigné, who assumes that such is the fact.

† D'Aubigné, Preface, p. v.

reached one precisely contrary. And the reasons which have forced us to draw this latter inference are so many and so cogent, that we are even under the conviction, that no one who will "consider the subject with impartiality and attention, and does not rest in a superficial view," can fail to agree with us.

In examining the secondary causes, by which God "gradually prepared men for the great transformation of the sixteenth century," our historian assigns a prominent place to the central and commanding position of Germany.

"As Judea, the birth-place of our religion, lay in the centre of the ancient world, so Germany was situate in the midst of Christian nations. She looked upon the Netherlands, England, France, Switzerland, Italy, Hungary, Bohemia, Poland, Denmark, and the whole of the north. It was fit that the principle of life should develop itself in the *heart* of Europe, that its pulses might circulate through all the arteries of the body the generous blood designed to vivify its members."\*

He alleges the following most singular reasons why Germany was prepared for embracing the Reformation:

"The Germans had received from Rome that element of modern civilization, the faith. Instruction, legislation—all, save their courage and their weapons, had come to them from the sacerdotal city. Strong ties had from that time attached Germany to the Papacy."†—Therefore was she "ripe" for a rupture with Rome! This connexion with Rome "made the reaction more powerful at the moment of awakening."‡

Again: "The gospel had never been offered to Germany in its primitive purity; the first missionaries who visited the country gave to it a religion already vitiated in more than one particular. It was a law of the Church, a spiritual discipline, that Boniface and his successors carried to the Frisons, the Saxons, and other German nations. Faith in the 'good tidings,' that faith which rejoices the heart and makes it free indeed, had remained unknown to them."§—Therefore, when Luther and his brother reformers announced these "good

---

\* D'Aubigné, Book i, p. 76.

† Ibid., p. 79.

‡ Ibid., pp. 78, 79.

§ Ibid., p. 78.



tidings" in all their purity for the first time—fraught too with endless variations and contradictions—The Germans were prepared for the "awakening," and received the gospel with enthusiasm!! Truly, our fanciful and romantic historian loves to reason by contraries, and to startle his readers by palpable absurdities!

No less curious is his reason for explaining why the Italians did not receive the new gospel:

"And if the truth was destined to come from the north, how could the Italians, so enlightened, of so refined a taste and social habits, so delicate in their own eyes, condescend to receive any thing at the hands of the barbarous Germans? Their pride, in fact, raised between the Reformation and themselves a barrier higher than the Alps. But the very nature of their mental culture was a still greater obstacle than the presumption of their hearts. Could men, who admired the elegance of a well cadenced sonnet more than the majestic simplicity of the Scriptures, be a propitious soil for the seed of God's word? A false civilization is, of all conditions of a nation, that which is most repugnant to the gospel."\*

Those who have read Roscoe's "Life and Pontificate of Leo X.," will greatly question the accuracy of this picture of Italian civilization. We shall prove in the sequel, that, both before and during the time of the Reformation, Italy did much more than Germany, to evidence her admiration "for the majestic simplicity of the Scriptures." At present we will barely remark, that the gist of D'Aubigné's theory consists in the assertion, that Italy was too enlightened, too refined in taste and social habits, too delicate in her own eyes, and consequently too proud and presumptuous to receive the new gospel; while Germany, being on the contrary, less enlightened, less refined, and more corrupt in doctrine and morals, was a more genial soil—just the one, in fact, which was most "ripe" for its reception, and most likely to foster its growth! We most cheerfully award to him the entire benefit of this novel and marvelous speculation on the most suitable means of disposing men's minds for the willing reception of gospel truth.

---

\* D'Aubigné, Book i, p. 84.

To confirm this singular theory still further, he thus accounts for the singular fact that Spain did not embrace Protestantism :

"Spain possessed, what Italy did not—a serious and noble people, whose religious mind has resisted even the stern trial of the eighteenth century, and of the revolution (French), and maintained itself to our own days. In every age, this people has had among its clergy men of piety and learning, and it was sufficiently remote from Rome to throw off without difficulty her yoke. There are few nations wherein one might more reasonably have hoped for a revival of that primitive Christianity, which Spain had probably received from St. Paul himself. And yet Spain did not then stand up among the nations. She was destined to be an example of that word of the divine wisdom, 'the first shall be last.'"<sup>\*</sup>

What a pity! We have little doubt ourselves, that these were precisely some of the principal reasons, why Spain did not stand up among the nations who revolted against Catholicity in the sixteenth century: and her having passed unscathed through this fiery ordeal of reckless innovation, may also serve to explain to us, how she was enabled "to resist even the stern trial of the eighteenth century, and of the revolution." Her people were too "serious and too noble," their mind was too "religious," and their clergy had too much "piety and learning," to allow them to be carried away by the novel vagaries of Protestantism.

Among the "various circumstances which conduced to the deplorable result"—of her remaining Catholic, D'Aubigné mentions her "remoteness from Germany," the "*heart*" of Europe—"an eager desire after riches" in the new world—the influence of her "powerful clergy"—and her military glory, which had just risen to its zenith, after the conquest of Grenada and the expulsion of the Moors. In reference to this last cause, he asks emphatically: "How could a people who had expelled Mohammed from their noble country, allow Luther to make way in it?"†—This question is at least characteristic! Was there then, in the ideas of the serious and noble Spaniards, so little difference between Luther and Mo-

---

<sup>\*</sup> D'Aubigné, Book i, p. 85.

† Ibid., p. 86.

hammed? And is our philosophic historian half inclined himself to think, that they were not so very far out in their logic.

"Few countries," he says, "seemed likely to be better disposed than France for the reception of the evangelical doctrines. Almost all the intellectual and spiritual life of the middle ages was concentrated in her. It might have been said, that the paths were everywhere trodden for a grand manifestation of the truth."\*—Perhaps this very preservation of the intellectual and spiritual life of the middle ages, was a principal reason why France continued Catholic. A little farther on,† he continues: "The (French) people, of quick feeling, intelligent, and susceptible of generous emotions, were as open, or even more so than other nations, to the truth. It seemed as if the Reformation must be, among them, the birth which should crown the travail of several centuries. But the chariot of France, which seemed for so many generations to be advancing to the same goal, suddenly turned at the moment of the Reformation, and took a contrary direction. Such was the will of Him, who rules nations and their kings."—We greatly admire his pious resignation to the will of God! This sentiment may perhaps console him for his disappointment; "that the augury of ages was deceived," in regard to France.‡ He adds, in the same pious strain: "Perhaps, if she had received the gospel, she might have become too powerful!"

He winds up his affecting Jeremiad over France with these and similar passages:

"France, after having been almost reformed, found herself, in the result, Roman Catholic. The sword of her princes, cast into the scale, caused it to incline in favor of Rome. Alas! another sword, that of the reformers themselves, insured the failure of the effort for reformation. The hands that had been accustomed to warlike weapons, ceased to be lifted up in prayer. It is by the blood of its confessors, not by that of its adversaries, that the gospel triumphs. Blood

---

\* D'Aubigné, Book i, p. 86.

† Ibid., p. 87.

‡ Ibid.

shed by its defenders, extinguishes and smothers it."\*—That is, the Reformation sought to establish itself in France by violence and by force, and it signally failed!† Elsewhere, as we shall see, it was more successful in the employment of such carnal weapons. But Protestantism obtained sufficient foothold in France to do incredible mischief for a century and a half; and it sowed upon her beautiful soil the fatal seeds which, two centuries and a half later, produced the bitter fruits of anarchy, infidelity, and bloodshed, during the dreadful "reign of terror!"

Such is the theory of D'Aubigné in regard to what we may perhaps designate the philosophy of the Reformation; and we now proceed to its refutation;—which is no difficult task, as in fact it sufficiently refutes itself.

---

\* D'Aubigné, Book i. p. 87.

† In our second volume, we shall have occasion to prove, we trust by abundant evidence, that this is strikingly true, and that D'Aubigné is not far wrong in his appreciation of the unsuccessful effort to thrust the Reformation on France.

## CHAPTER III.

## PRETEXTS FOR THE REFORMATION.

Usual plea—Abuses greatly exaggerated—Three questions put and answered—Origin of abuses—Free-will unimpaired—Councils to extirpate abuses—Church thwarted by princes and the world—Controversy on Investitures—Extent of the evil—Sale of indulgences—St. Peter's Church—John Tetzel—His errors greatly exaggerated—Public penance—License to sin—Nature of indulgences—Tetzel rebuked and his conduct disavowed by Rome—Miltitz and Cardinal Cajetan—Kindness thrown away—Luther in tears—Efforts of Rome—Leo X. and Adrian VI.—Their forbearance censured by Catholic writers—Their tardy severity justified by D'Aubigné—Luther's real purpose—The proper remedy—The real issue—Nullification—"Curing and cutting a throat"—Luther's avowal—Admissions of the confession of Augsburg and of Dailè—Summing up.

THE usual plea for the Reformation is, that it was necessary for the correction of the flagrant abuses which had crept into the Catholic Church. These are, of course, greatly exaggerated and are painted in the most glowing colors, by D'Aubigné, and by other writers favorable to the Reformation. He dwells with evident complacency on the vices of one or two Popes, and of some of the Catholic bishops and clergy, both secular and regular, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. He represents the whole Church as thoroughly corrupt, and states that, but for the efforts of the reformers, religion would have perished entirely from the face of the earth. We have already seen how he compared the reformers, preaching up their new-fangled doctrines among the benighted Roman Catholics of the sixteenth century, to the apostles preaching the gospel to the pagans of their day! And how coolly he assured us that the "Reformation was but the re-appearance of Christianity!" We beg to record our solemn protest against the gross injustice of this entire view of the subject.

But we are asked:—What? do you deny the existence of abuses in the Catholic Church? Do you deny, that those

abuses were great and wide spread? Do you deny, that it was proper, and even necessary to correct them?—We deny none of these things: except that there is an implied exaggeration in the second question. We admit the existence of the evil complained of, especially about the beginning of the sixteenth century; and we deplore it, as sincerely at least, as do the opponents of the Catholic Church. A good cause can never suffer from candidly avowing the truth, and the whole truth. Let genuine history pronounce its verdict as to the real facts of the case; and we at once bow to the decision. But what was the origin of the abuses complained of? what was their extent? and what was the adequate and proper remedy for them? We will endeavor briefly to answer these three questions, which, we apprehend, go to the root of the matter under discussion.

1. It was not the intention of Christ, nor was it the design of the Christian religion wholly to prevent the possibility of abuses. He willed, indeed, that all men should embrace His religion, and reduce its holy principles to practice; in which case, there would have been no disorders nor abuses on the face of the earth, and the world would have been an earthly paradise, free from all stain of sin. But this state of perfection could not have been effectually brought about, without offering violence to man's free will, which God, in His moral government of the world, has ever wished to leave unimpaired. Religion was freely offered to mankind, with all its saving truths, its holy maxims, its purifying institutions, and its powerful sanctions of rewards and punishments in an after-life. Sufficient grace was also bounteously proffered to all, to enable them to learn and believe its doctrines, and to observe its commandments. But no one was *compelled* to do either. Even among the twelve chosen apostles, who were trained under the immediate eye of Christ, there was one "devil."

Christ himself foresaw and distinctly foretold that scandals would come; but He contented himself with pronouncing a

“woe on that man by whom the scandal cometh.”\* In His spiritual kingdom, the Church, there was to be cockle, as well as the good wheat, and He willed, “that both should grow until the harvest”† of the general judgment; in which only the final separation of the good and evil will take place. Nothing is more foreign to the nature of Christ’s Church, than the proposition that it was intended only to comprise the elect and the just. The struggle between good and evil—between truth and error—between the powers of heaven and the “gates of hell”—is to go on until the consummation of the world: but Christ has pledged His solemn word, that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against His Church;”‡ and that He will be with the body of His pastors and teachers “all days even to the consummation of the world.”§

Abuses are accordingly known to have existed in all ages of the Church, even during her palmyest days. The writings of the earliest fathers—of St. Cyprian, of Tertullian, of St. Ambrose, and St. John Chrysostom—paint them in the most glowing colors. The Church never approved of them—she could not do so even for a day; for Christ had solemnly promised to guard her, His own beloved and glorious Spouse, “without spot or wrinkle,” from falling away from her fidelity by lapsing into or sanctioning error. She bore her constant testimony against them, and labored without intermission for their removal. Her eighteen general councils, one for each century, and her local ecclesiastical assemblies, almost without number—diocesan, provincial, and national,—what are they all but evidences of this her constant solicitude, and records of her noble and repeated struggles for the extirpation of error and vice? There is not an error that she has not proscribed; not a vice nor an abuse upon which she has not set the seal of her condemnation. She was divinely commissioned for this purpose: and well and fully has she discharged the sacred commission.

---

\* Math. xviii : 7.

† Math. xvi : 18.

‡ Ibid., xiii : 30.

§ Ibid., xxviii : 20.

Whenever she was not opposed nor thwarted in her heavenly purpose by the wicked ones of the earth, error and vice disappeared before her, like the mist before the rising sun. But she had at all times to contend with numerous, and sometimes, from the human point of view, with seemingly insurmountable obstacles. This was particularly the case during the middle ages. The princes of the earth, especially in Germany, sought, during that whole period, to enslave the Church, and to make the bishops the mere subservient instruments of their worldly purposes and earthly ambition. This they endeavored to effect by making them their vassals, and by claiming a right to confer on them even the *INSIGNIA* of their spiritual office. The effect of this last claim was to render the appointment of bishops and of the higher clergy, as well as the exercise of their spiritual jurisdiction, but too often dependent on the corrupt policy or mischievous whims of the secular power. The Roman Pontiffs maintained an arduous contest, for centuries, with the emperors of Germany and with other princes, against this glaring and wicked usurpation, fraught as it was with countless evils to the Church, which it attacked in the very fountains of her spiritual power. The question of Investitures was one of vital consequence, of liberty or slavery for the Church. After a protracted struggle the Pontiffs succeeded; but their success was neither so complete nor so permanent as the friends of the Church could have wished. Emperors, kings, and princes, especially those of the Germanic body, had still far too much power in the nomination of bishops and of the clergy.\*

II. The consequences were most disastrous for the Church. Unworthy bishops were often intruded by the German emperors and princes into the principal sees. The example and the influence of these were frequently baneful to the charac-

---

\* This, we think, we have already sufficiently established in the Introductory chapter to the present volume.



ter of the inferior clergy. Owing to the operation of these causes, the bishops and clergy of Germany, many of them, had greatly degenerated, about the beginning of the sixteenth century. Still there were many brilliant exceptions. The evil was by no means so general or so wide-spread as it is usually represented. We are yet free to avow that it is difficult to explain how such large bodies of the clergy abandoned the Church in many countries of Europe, in any other supposition than that they had sadly degenerated from primitive fervor. At the bidding of their prince, or at the prompting of their own self-interest, they, in an evil hour, abandoned that Church which they had promised to defend, and at whose altars they had been solemnly consecrated!

The abuse and alleged sale of indulgences afforded the principal pretext for the first movements of the Reformation. The Church had always maintained her power to grant indulgences: she never sanctioned, in her official capacity, the abuses which, at some times and in some places, grew out of the exercise of this power. In the early centuries the canons imposed long and painful public penances on certain grievous transgressions. A canon of the general Council of Nice, in 325, had given to the bishops a discretionary power to remit the whole or a part of those penances, when the penitent manifested special fervor. Other councils made similar enactments. During the middle ages the rigor of the ancient penitential system was greatly softened down: and the penances themselves were often commuted into alms or other pious works.

About the beginning of the sixteenth century, Leo X. determined to push forward to completion a project conceived by his predecessor Julius II., of erecting in Rome a Christian temple, which should far surpass, in dimensions and magnificence, any thing that the world had ever yet seen. The origination of the plan of St. Peter's church was an idea worthy the mind of these magnificent Pontiffs; and its erection, which they commenced, is one among the noblest monu-

ments to their fame.\* To promote an object so splendid, Leo promulgated a bull, in which he promised ample indulgences to all who would contribute to so laudable an undertaking. And, if there were no other proof of the utility of indulgences, the erection of that splendid temple, mainly due to them, is a monument which would go far towards removing every cavil on the subject. No one can enter that church without being forcibly impressed with the majesty of God and the grandeur of the Christian religion. To borrow the idea of a modern poet, his soul, on passing its portals and casting a glance at its immense and almost sublime proportions and marvelous symmetry, becomes "as colossal as the building itself!"

Albert, archbishop of Mayence and Magdeburg, was appointed by the Pontiff to carry out the intentions of the bull

---

\* Of Julius II. and Leo X. much has been written which is favorable, and much also that is unfavorable to their character as Pontiffs, if not as men. By some they have been represented as worldly-minded, and as being too much guided by earthly policy. Few, if any writers of respectability, no matter how prejudiced, have ventured a word against their moral character. Both were distinguished patrons of learning; both were men of enlarged minds and liberal views. Even the prejudiced Menzel says of Leo, that "he was free from personal vices."—(Vol. ii, p. 219.) The eulogy pronounced on him by Roscoe, the liberal minded English Protestant historian of his pontificate, is well known. Of Julius II. this same writer says: "His vigorous and active mind corresponded with the restless spirit of the times, his ambition was not the passion of a groveling mind, nor were the advantages he sought of a temporary or personal nature. To establish the authority of the Holy See throughout Europe, to recover the dominions of the Church, to expel all foreign powers from Italy, and to restore that country to the dominion of its native princes, were the vast objects of his comprehensive mind. And these objects he lived to a great degree to accomplish."—(Roscoe, *Life, etc.*, of Leo X., p. 291; quoted in *Dublin Review*, for September, 1855.) If as a temporal prince he went to war, contrary to the example set him by his predecessors, it was for high and noble purposes; to drive the foreign intruder from Italy, and to establish, along with Italian independence, the rights of his See and throne. It is refreshing to see Protestant writers like Roscoe and Voigt stepping forth to defend the Roman Pontiffs.

in Germany. He nominated John Tetzel, a Dominican friar, to be the chief preacher of the indulgences. We have no mission to defend the extravagances imputed to this man. To us it appears that much injustice has been done him, and that his errors have been greatly exaggerated by his enemies. He seems to have been in the main a good man, with perhaps not an over stock of prudence or discretion. The magnificent terms in which he set forth the utility and efficacy of the indulgences should have been explained, in common justice, according to the well known doctrine and practice of the Church on the subject.\*

One thing is certain, that the abuses of which he is accused were not authorized by the Church or the Pontiff. Even D'Aubigné, surely an unexceptionable witness, tells us as much. He admits that, "in the Pope's bull, something was said of the repentance of the heart and the confession of the lips:" but he adds that "Tetzel and his companions cautiously abstained from all mention of these, otherwise their coffers might have remained empty;"† and that this omission was in consequence of instructions from Archbishop Albert, "who forbade them even to mention conversion or contrition."‡ And yet, on the same page, he acknowledges that confession, which necessarily presupposes conversion and contrition of heart, was a prerequisite to the granting of the indulgence!

---

\* Menzel says, that he carried about a money box, on which was written what has been elegantly done into English as follows :

"As the money in you pop,  
The souls from Purgatory hop."

Ibid. p. 221.

This retailing of vulgar gossip in doggerel verse, and without any sufficient authority, is unworthy a grave historian. The contribution of alms for a religious or charitable purpose was a usual condition for gaining Indulgences, which might profit not only the one who fulfilled *all* the conditions, but also, by way of suffrage or prayer, the souls suffering in purgatory. It is highly probable that Tetzel did not go further than this, and that most of the clamor against him was raised by his enemies.

† D'Aubigné, vol. i, p. 214.

‡ Ibid., p. 215.

"Confession being gone through (and it was soon dispatched), the faithful hastened to the vender."\*

We have strong reason to object to this term *vender*: the granting of the indulgence, even according to the avowedly unauthorized practice of Tetzel,† did not justify the idea of a sale or traffic, properly so called. The offering made on the occasion was entirely free: those who were unable to contribute any thing, still obtained the coveted boon; and those who were able, contributed according to their ability or will, no fixed amount being determined. All that even D'Aubigné asserts on this subject is, that "an angry look was cast on those who dared to close their purses."‡ When Protestant preachers take up collections at the close of their sermons, for the support of themselves, and of their wives and children, can it be said with propriety, that they sell their sermons for the amounts thus contributed, even should it happen that those sums more than equaled the value received, and that they cast angry looks on those who do not bestow? But the questors of indulgences did not go thus far, even according to the showing of our very prejudiced historian. He tell us, "that the hand that delivered the indulgence could not receive the money: that was forbidden under the severest penalties."§

He even admits, that, notwithstanding the boasted efficacy of the indulgences, public penance was still enjoined by Tetzel and his associates, for offenses which had given public scandal. "If, among those who pressed into the confessionals, there came one whose crimes had been public, and yet untouched by the civil laws, such person was obliged; first of all, to do public penance."||—Did this look like patronizing vice? Was it not rather a salutary restraint on guilt, imposed

---

\* D'Aubigné, vol i, p. 215.

† If such was really his practice, which is doubtful.

‡ D'Aubigné, vol i, p. 216.

§ Ibid.

|| Ibid. True, he calls this a "wretched mummary," because Protestants can not, or will not, understand or appreciate these works of penance!

as a condition for obtaining the indulgence? The very nature of the indulgence itself, and the conditions *always* required to obtain it, and clearly set forth in this very bull of Leo X., far from favoring sin, or being an incentive to its commission, necessarily operated as a powerful curb to passion and a stimulant to repentance and piety: its blessed effects being promised only to those who were truly penitent, and were desirous at least of becoming fervent. An indulgence is merely a sequel to the sacrament of penance: it removes only the temporal penalty, which may remain due, *after* the sin itself and the eternal punishment due to it have been already remitted: and, according to its very nature, it can not take effect, until all grievous sin has been already pardoned through sincere repentance and the sacrament of penance. It offers then, essentially, a most powerful inducement to repentance and amendment of life; it gives no encouragement to lukewarmness.

The acts of Tetzl were officially disavowed by the representative of the Roman court. In 1519, Charles Miltitz, the papal envoy, openly rebuked him for his conduct in the affair of the indulgences; and even charged him with having been the occasion of most of the troubles which during the previous two years had afflicted Germany.\* He, however, condemned the friar unheard, relying chiefly upon the exaggerated representations of his enemies. He would not even allow the Dominican to defend himself against the grievous charges brought against him by Luther.† Among these was the accusation, that he had uttered horrid blasphemies against the Blessed Virgin Mary. In a letter to Miltitz, Tetzl indignantly repelled this charge: but the spirit of the monk was broken; and he died soon after, most probably of chagrin. Most writers of impartiality blame the conduct of the papal

---

These are not in accordance with their refined taste and exquisite sense of the amenities scattered along the way of salvation!

\* D'Aubigné, vol. ii, p. 16.

† See Audin, "Life of Luther," p. 89, 90.

envoy, who immoderately flattered Luther on the one hand, and sacrificed Tetzels on the other.\* His motive, however, was a good one: to conciliate Luther by removing all reasonable causes of complaint, and thus to heal the schism with which the refractory monk menaced the Church of God.

But Miltitz did not know his man. All conciliation was entirely thrown away on him. The learned and amiable Cardinal Cajetan, a year before, had made the attempt to win him by kindness, in the interview they had at Augsburg. Luther was affected even unto tears by this goodness; and, at the close of the conference, he addressed the cardinal nuncio in the following strain: "I return to you, my father! . . . I am moved. I have no more fear: my fear is changed into love and filial respect; you might have employed force, but you have chosen persuasion and charity. Yes, I avow it now; I have been violent and hostile, and have spoken irreverently of the Pope. I was provoked to these excesses; but I should have been more guarded on so serious a question, and, in answering a fool, I should have avoided imitating his folly. I am affected and penitent, and ask for pardon. I will acknowledge my repentance to whoever wishes to hear it declared. For the future, I promise you, father, to speak and act otherwise than I have done: God will assist me; I will speak no more of indulgences, provided you impose silence on all those who have involved me in these difficulties."† He concludes this letter with the following sentence: "I beseech you then, with all humility, to report this whole affair to our holy father, Pope Leo X., that the Church may decide on what is to be believed, and what is to be rejected."‡ And yet, but a few weeks later, he published an inflammatory tract, in which he complained bitterly of the severity of Cajetan, spoke harshly of the Pope, and appealed to a general council.§ We have already seen how, while he promised every thing to Miltitz,

---

\* See Audin, "Life of Luther," p. 89, 90.

† Apud Audin, *ibid.*, p. 81.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ *Lutheri Opera*, Tom. i, fol. 217. Audin, p. 85, *seqq.*

he laughed, in letters to his private friends, at the "crocodile tears" and "Judas-like kiss" of that weak and duped nuncio!

The reformation of abuses in the matter of indulgences was but a pretext: the real motives of Luther and his partisans were very different, as the result proved. The Pope, through his legates, had done every thing that could have been reasonably asked for the removal of the evils complained of. If the court of Rome was guilty of any fault, it was that of excessive leniency to Luther, and of too great a spirit of conciliation towards his partisans.\* This was especially true of the good Adrian VI., who succeeded Leo X. in the pontificate, early in the year 1522.† He immediately set about the work of reform with great zeal, both at Rome and in Germany. He took from the questors the power of distributing indulgences. In the diet of Nuremberg, in 1522, he offered, through his legate, Cheregat, to reform every abuse.‡

How were his advances met? They were repaid by

\* Pallavicino censures Leo X. for his excessive forbearance with Luther, and for having commissioned Doctor Eck to publish the bull against him in Germany. (*Storia del Conc. di Trento* cap. xxv.) Muratori joins in the censures: "Papa Leone, che ruminando alti pensieri di gloria mondana, e piu che agli affari della religione agonizante in Germania pensando all' ingrandimento della chiesa temporale." (*Annali*, vol. x, p. 245.) Audin ably defends the Pontiff, p. 115.

† Adrian was a Fleming, and he had been preceptor of Charles V., who had been elected emperor of Germany but a short time previously. The fifth general Council of Lateran, held under his predecessor Leo, had already done much towards eradicating abuses, of which its various canons are a satisfactory evidence. The assembled fathers with the Pontiff had the sagacity to discover and the boldness to strike at the very root of almost all the then existing disorders; namely the usurpation by the temporal power of the sacred rights of the Church to appoint her own bishops and clergy. In condemning the principles of the Pragmatic Sanction, they laid the axe at the root of the fatal tree, which had produced fruit so very poisonous to the atmosphere of the Church. But this was not the kind of reformation which the princes of the earth sought or aimed at!

‡ "Neuere Geschichte der Deutschen, von Karl Ad. Menzel," a Protestant. T. i. Apud Audin, p. 280..

triumphant insult and indignity. The diet, under Lutheran influence, drew up an inflammatory paper containing the famous *Centum Gravamina*—or “hundred grievances”—fraught with unfounded and highly exaggerated charges against Rome. And yet the good Pontiff did not return railing for railing. He still promised to do every thing in his power to remove all causes of reasonable complaint. This saintly Pontiff, “who thought not of evil, and of whom the world was not worthy,” according to the testimony of a Protestant historian,\* died of a broken heart after the return of Cheregat. All the poor of Rome followed his hearse, and bewailed him: they said, “our father is dead!” While it passed, the people knelt down and burst into tears. Never had funeral pomp called forth so deep a feeling.†

What, in fact, could Rome have done, which she did not do, to redress every reasonable grievance, and to carry out every necessary measure of reform? Did the reformers ask for forbearance? Rome was perhaps too forbearing. Did they wish for a spirit of conciliation? Rome descended from her lofty dignity, and met them half way; and then they rudely repulsed her advances! Even D'Aubigné praises the forbearance of Leo X., and the “equity of the Romish synod,” which prepared the bull against Luther.‡ He adds:

“In fact, Rome was brought into the necessity of having recourse to measures of stern severity. The gauntlet was thrown down, the combat must be to the death. It was not the abuses of the Pontiff's authority, that Luther had attacked. At his bidding, the Pope was required to descend meekly from his throne, and become again a simple pastor or bishop on the banks of the Tiber!” §

Had Luther sought only the truth, why did he so often consent to preserve silence, if the same obligation were imposed on his adversaries? Was this conduct worthy the apostle of reform, and the boasted champion of the gospel

\* Adolph Menzel, *supra*. Tom. i, p. 3. Apud Audin, p. 282.

† Audin, *ibid*.

‡ D'Aubigné, vol. ii, p. 101.

§ *Ibid*, p. 97. This is a most significant avowal.



in its purity? If he sought only truth, why did he not abide by the decisions of those numerous tribunals, to whose authority he himself had voluntarily appealed, as the most suitable and final arbiters of the matters in dispute? Why afterwards abuse them so intemperately, for having decided against him? The truth is, the love of truth and the reform of abuses were but shallow pretexts; the successive appeals just alluded to, were but crafty expedients to gain time:—the real object was separation from the Church, and the forming of a schismatical party, of which he would be the leader; while his own immediate sovereign, the elector of Saxony, and the other German princes and nobles, would be enriched from the abundant spoils of the old Church, which was to be destroyed to make way for the new. As we shall show a little further on, all the facts of history point to this, as the only rational method of accounting for the movement and explaining its success.

III. One of those tribunals to which Luther had appealed—the general Council of Trent—subsequently adopted every possible measure, that discreet zeal could have asked, for the reformation of abuses. By far the larger portion of its decrees are devoted to the work of reformation.\* On the subject of indulgences, the council employs this emphatic language: “Wishing to correct and amend the abuses which have crept into them, and on occasion of which, this signal name of indulgences is blasphemed by heretics, the holy synod enjoins in general by the present decree, that all wicked traffic for obtaining them, which has been the fruitful cause of many abuses among the Christian people, should be wholly abolished.”† The same decree recommends great

---

\* They are headed, *de Reformatione*, and make up, perhaps, more than three fourths of the whole matter of the council.

† *Sessio xxv. Decret. de Indulg.* “*Abusus vero, qui in his irrepserunt, et quorum occasione insigne hoc Indulgentiarum nomen ab hæreticis blasphematur, emendatos et correctos cupiens, præsentì decreto generaliter statuit, pravos quæstus omnes pro his consequendis, unde plurima in Christiano populo abusuum causa fluxit, omnino abolendos esse.*”

moderation in the granting of indulgences, and directs the bishops throughout the world diligently to inquire into and to refer all local abuses in this matter to provincial councils, which were to be thenceforth held every three years, and were to report their decisions to the Roman Pontiff. Could any wiser or more effectual measure of reform have been reasonably demanded?

Mr. Hallam, a witness whose authority will not be suspected, bears ample testimony to the learning and merit of the Tridentine fathers. After having refuted at some length "a strange notion that has been started of late years in England, that the Council of Trent made important innovations in the previously established doctrines of the western Church: an hypothesis," he says, "so paradoxical in respect to public opinion, and, it must be added, so prodigiously at variance with the known facts of ecclesiastical history, that we can not but admire the facility with which it has been taken up;" he thus continues:

"No council ever contained so many persons of eminent learning and ability as that of Trent; nor is there ground for believing that any other ever investigated the questions before it with so much patience, acuteness, temper, and desire of truth. The early councils, unless they are greatly belied (as is very probably the case,) would not bear comparison in these characteristics. Impartiality and freedom from prejudice no Protestant will attribute to the fathers of Trent; but where will he produce these qualities in an ecclesiastical synod? But it may be said, that they had but one leading prejudice, that of determining theological faith according to the tradition of the Catholic Church, as handed down to their own age. This one point of authority conceded, I am not aware that they can be proved to have decided wrong, or, at least, against all reasonable evidence. Let those who have imbibed a different opinion ask themselves, whether they have read Sarpi through with any attention, especially as to those sessions of the Tridentine council which preceded its suspension in 1547."\*

The history of the Council of Trent by Cardinal Pallavicino, which Hallam acknowledges he never read, would greatly confirm this conclusion. All previous councils, both general

---

\* Introduction to the History of Literature, vol. i, p. 277, note.

and local, had adopted measures for reform, marked with similar wisdom and zeal. Many of the decrees of the general Council of Constance, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, as well as those of the Council of Basle,\* towards the middle of the same century, had been distinguished by the same earnest solicitude for the correction of abuses. D'Aubigné is forced to admit this. "Had not gentler means been tried for ages? Had they not seen council after council convoked with the intention of reforming the Church!"† True, he adds, without however even the shadow of proof, that "all had been in vain."‡ He also asserts against all evidence, that Martin V., who was chosen Pontiff at the Council of Constance, A. D. 1418, with the express stipulation, that he should carry out the measures of reform commenced by the council, subsequently refused to redeem his pledge.§ But did not this Pontiff convoke councils for the purpose successively at Pavia, Sienna, and Basle? And was it his fault that his intentions were not fully carried out? Was it not rather the fault of those, who, while always clamoring for reformation, were really averse to its being brought about in the only conservative and effectual manner? Unless all history is false, this is certainly the case.

The controversy, in fact, did not turn so much on the necessity of reform, as on the means best calculated to bring it about. There were two ways of reforming abuses in the Church; the one from *within*, the other from *without*; the one by gentle and legal means, the other by lawless violence. The Catholics were in favor of the former, the Protestants of the latter mode. The former wished to remain in the Church, which Christ had commanded them to hear, and to labor therein for the extirpation of abuses; the latter separated from the Church, and covered it

---

\* Before it degenerated into a schismatical conventicle, during the last sessions, especially after the tenth.

† D'Aubigné, vol. i, p. 104.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid. p. 56.

with obloquy, against the solemn injunction of its divine Founder.

Were not the Catholics right in urging this, as the only safe and effectual method of reforming the Church? Had they not clearly the sanction of all previous ages, which, following the precedent set them by the inspired Apostles themselves in the council at Jerusalem, had ever sought to proscribe error and to correct abuses, by legal enactments in general or particular councils? And did not the Protestants, on the contrary, follow the precedent set them by the separatists and heretics of every age of the Church? What real difference is there, in the principle, between the Lutherans protesting against the decisions of the Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century, and the Arians, against those of the Council of Nice, in the fourth?

Besides, were not reason and logic clearly on the side of the Catholics? Which is the proper way to cure a sick patient; to remain with him, and to administer to him medicine, or to separate from him, and to denounce him for his malady? Which is the preferable way to repair an edifice; to remain within or near it, and to labor patiently to re-establish it in its former strength and beauty, or to leave it and bedaub its walls with mud and slime? Finally, which would be the better patriot: he who would remain faithful to the republic, and patiently await the progress of legal enactments for the redress of grievances, or he who would *nullify* the union under pretext of those grievances? Let the seal of public reprobation set upon a recent attempt of the kind—in which the principle of disorganization was precisely the same as that which urged the reformers to *nullify* the unity of the Church—answer this question. An old Protestant divine of the Church of England, illustrates the evil of separation from the Church, under pretext of reforming it, by the following quaint comparison: “You may cure a throat when it is *sore*, but not when it is *cut*.”\*

---

\* South—Sermons; vol. v, p. 946. Edit. London, 1737, quoted in the Amicable Discussion, by Bishop Trevern.

Luther himself avowed the correctness of these principles, about two years after he had commenced his pretended Reformation.

"That the Roman Church," he says, "is more honored by God than all others, is not to be doubted. St. Peter, St. Paul, forty-six popes, some hundreds of thousands of martyrs, have laid down their lives in its communion, having overcome hell and the world; so that the eyes of God rest on the Roman Church with special favor. Though now-a-days every thing is in a wretched state, it is no ground for separating from it. On the contrary, the worse things are going, the more should we hold close to it; *for it is not by separation from it that we can make it better.* We must not separate from God on account of any work of the devil, nor cease to have fellowship with the children of God, who are still abiding in the pale of Rome, on account of the multitude of the ungodly. There is no sin, no amount of evil, which should be permitted to dissolve the bond of charity, or break the unity of the body. For love can do all things, and nothing is difficult to those who are united."\*

Sentiments almost worthy of a Gregory VII., or of a Bernard! Had he persevered in them—had he not, with his accustomed duplicity or fickleness, substituted, almost immediately afterwards, a principle of hatred for that principle of love "which can do all things," the world might never have been cursed with the countless evils of schism and heresy.

The sentiments of Luther just given were re-echoed even in the confession of Augsburg, the official expositor of Lutheran doctrines.† In the conclusion of its exposition of

\* *Lutheri Opera Lat.* tom. xvii, p. 224. Apud D'Aubigné, ii, 18, 19.

† In the conference at Augsburg, a large portion of the Lutherans, under the leadership of Melancthon, sought for a return to unity through a reconciliation with the Holy See. Their efforts were, however, sternly opposed and rendered wholly abortive by Luther, who would hear of no reunion with Rome. When Melancthon urged the measure, by alleging the endless contradictions into which the champions of the new doctrines would otherwise fall, and by even venturing timidly to point out the doctrinal variations and inconsistencies of Luther himself, his imperious master answered in the following characteristic strain:

"My adversaries quote my contradictions to make a parade of their learning; blockheads that they are! How can they judge of the contradictions of our doctrines, who do not understand the texts which clash with each

faith, it is freely admitted, that the Roman Catholic Church had retained every article of doctrine essential to salvation, and that the abuses which had crept in were unauthorized, and afforded no sufficient cause for separation. "Such is the abridgment of our faith, in which nothing will be found contrary to Scripture, or to the Catholic Church, or even to the Roman Church, as far as we can know it from its writers. The dispute turns upon some few abuses, which have been introduced into the churches *without any certain authority*; and should there be found some difference, that should be borne with, since it is not necessary that the rites of the Church should be everywhere the same."\* Even the Calvinist minister of Charenton, Daillé, much as he hated the Catholic Church, makes a similar avowal. After having enumerated those articles of his belief, which he is pleased to call *fundamental*, he says: "Rome does not call in question the articles which we believe; it even professes to believe them. Who can deny, even in our day, that Rome admits the necessary articles?"†—Why then separate from her?

Hitherto we have treated of the origin and extent of the evils which afforded the reformers a pretext for the Reformation; and we have also endeavored to point out the only effectual and proper means for correcting abuses, and for preserving the Church in that purity which the promises of Christ have guaranteed to her, and to show what was the only

---

other? How can our doctrine appear to them otherwise than embarrassed with contradictions, when it demands and condemns works, rejects and authorizes the necessity of rites, honors and censures the magistracy, affirms and denies sin? But why carry water to the sea? *Cum simul exigat et damnet opera, simul tollat et restituat ritus, simul magistratum colat et arguat, simul peccata asserat et neget? Sed quid aquas in mare?*" Apud Audin, in loco. Epist. Melancthoni, 20 Jul. 1520.

How, indeed, could any one be expected to reconcile these palpable contradictions of the arch-reformer!

\* Art. xxi. Anno Dom. 1530. Confessio Augustana. See also Audin, vol. ii, p. 337, London edition, Turnbull's translation.

† "Institut. Chrésiennes," l. iv, ch. ii, and "La Loi fondée, part. iii.

true method of solving the great problem of the sixteenth century. We will now proceed to examine the means really adopted by the reformers for that alleged purpose, as well to exhibit the true motives which prompted and guided their action; and through these we will endeavor to account for the rapidity with which the Reformation was diffused over a large portion of Europe.

---

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE TRUE CAUSES OF THE REFORMATION, AND THE MEANS BY WHICH IT WAS EFFECTED.

Saying of Frederick the Great—What we mean to prove—Testimony of Hallam—Doctrines of Luther—Justification without works—Its dreadful consequences avowed—The “slave-will”—Man, a beast with two riders—Dissuasive from celibacy—An easy way to heaven—D’Aubigné’s discreet silence—Testimony of the Diet of Worms on Luther’s doctrines—An old lady emancipated—Protection of princes—Schlegel’s testimony—The reformers flatter princes and pander to their vices—Remarkable avowals of Menzel—The Reformation and state policy—The princes become bishops—A reformed dispensation—Character of reformed princes—Their cupidity—Fed by Luther—Protestant restitution—Open violence and sacrilegious spoliation—The *modus operandi* of the Reformation—Schlegel again—Abuse of the press—Vituperation and calumny—Policy of Luther’s marriage—Apostate monks—Recapitulation—A distinction—The Reformation “a reappearance of Christianity.”

WE believe it was Frederick the Great of Prussia, who was the author of the well-known saying: “That pride and avarice had caused the Reformation in Germany, lawless love in England, and the love of novelty in France.” Perhaps the greatest severity of this remark, is its strict historic truth. It, of course, was intended merely to designate the first and most prominent among a variety of other causes. William Cobbett has proved—and whatever may have been said by his opponents of his character and reliability as a witness, no one

has yet disputed his facts or answered his arguments—that in England, the first cause alluded to above, was powerfully aided by cupidity, which fattened on the rich spoils of the Church, and by the reckless pride of ascendancy, which revealed in, and was cemented by the blood of vast numbers of innocent victims, whose only crime was their conscientious adherence to the religion of their fathers.

We will present a mass of evidence to prove, that in Germany, the Reformation, which was commenced in the pride of revolt, was fed and kept alive by avarice and licentiousness, was propagated by calumny, by violence, and by pandering to the worst passions, and was consummated and rendered permanent by the fostering care of secular princes, without whose protection it would have died away and come to naught. This is strong language; but it is more than justified by the facts of history: not indeed as those facts have been travestied, miscolored, and perverted by such partial writers as D'Aubigné; but, as they are clearly set forth by contemporary historians, and as they appear in the original documents. We shall allege only such facts as are undoubted and clearly established from these sources.

But before we adduce this evidence, let us see what a very learned and enlightened modern Protestant historian thinks on this subject, to the investigation of which he has devoted much time and labor. Mr. Hallam gives us the result of his researches in the following passages, which we quote from his latest work:

“Whatever may be the bias of our minds as to the truth of Luther's doctrines, we should be careful, in considering the Reformation as a part of the history of mankind, not to be misled by the superficial and ungrounded representations which we sometimes find in modern writers (D'Aubigné for example). Such is this, that Luther, struck by the absurdity of the prevailing superstitions, was desirous of introducing a more rational system of religion; or, that he contended for freedom of inquiry, and the boundless privileges of individual judgment; or, what others have been pleased to suggest, that his zeal for learning and ancient philosophy led him to attack the ignorance of the monks and the crafty policy of the church, which with-



stood all liberal studies. These notions are merely fallacious refinements, as every man of plain understanding (except, *perhaps*, D'Aubigné) who is acquainted with the writings of the early reformers, or has considered their history, must acknowledge."\*

In another place, the same candid Protestant historian has this remarkable passage:

"The adherents to the Church of Rome have never failed to cast two reproaches on those who left them : one, that the reform was brought about by intemperate and calumnious abuse, by outrages of an excited populace, or by the tyranny of princes ; the other, that, after stimulating the most ignorant to reject the authority of their Church, it instantly withdrew this liberty of judgment, and devoted all who presumed to swerve from the line drawn by law to virulent obloquy, and sometimes to bonds and death. *These reproaches, it may be a shame to us to own, can be uttered and can not be refuted.*" †

After making this painful avowal, he enters upon a labored argument to prove that the Reformation could have succeeded by no other means!‡ The reformers, as we have seen, were not content with clamoring for the reform of abuses: they laid violent hands on the sacred deposit of the faith itself. Like Oza of old, they put forth their hands to the ark of God, mindless of Oza's awful fate!§ Under the plea that the Catholic Church had fallen into numerous and fatal doctrinal errors, and that the Reformation could not be thorough without the removal of these, they rejected many doctrines which the whole world had hitherto revered as the revelation of God; and they substituted in their place new tenets, which they professed to find more conformable to the word of God. This is not the place to examine whether these new doctrines are true; all that our plan calls for at present, is to inquire what those doctrines were, and what was their practical bearing on the work of the Reformation? Were they really cal-

\* Introduction to the History of Literature. Sup. Cit. vol. i, p. 165. sec. 60-61.

† Ibid., p. 200, sec. 34. As we shall have occasion to show a little further on, this avowal rests on the facts of sober history, as related by Protestants themselves.

‡ Ibid.

§ 2 Kings (1 Samuel) vi: 6.

culated to exercise an influence beneficial to morals and to society! Were they adequate means to reform the Church? As it would be tedious to exhibit even a brief summary of all the contradictory tenets held by the early reformers, or even by the early Lutherans themselves, we must confine ourselves to those broached and defended by Luther, the boasted father and founder of the Reformation. And we shall state nothing for which we will not exhibit chapter and verse from his own writings.\*

The leading tenet of Luther's doctrine was, a belief in justification by faith alone without works. This is the key to his entire system. Let us see the modest way in which he asserts this doctrine, one that he always styled a fundamental article.

"Well, then, I, Dr. Martin Luther, an unworthy evangelist of our Lord Jesus Christ, do confess this article, 'that faith alone without works justifies in the sight of God;' and I declare that, in spite of the emperor of the Romans, the emperor of the Turks, the emperor of the Tartars, the emperor of the Persians, the Pope, all the cardinals, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, kings, princes, nobles, all the world, and all the devils, it shall stand unshaken forever! That, if they will persist in opposing this truth, they will draw upon their heads the flames of hell. This is the true and holy gospel, and the declaration of me, Doctor Luther, according to the light given to me by the Holy Ghost."†

This declaration was made in 1531; and, according to D'Aubigné, who quotes Seckendorf, Luther's most ardent admirer, he received this new light of the Holy Ghost while visiting "Pilate's stair-case" ‡ in Rome, a few years before he

---

\* Some of the modern editions of Luther's works have been greatly *expurgated* by his admirers. We shall quote from the oldest and most authentic editions, those of Wittenberg, of Jena, of Frankfort, of Altenberg, of Leipsic, and Geneva. That of Wittenberg was put forth by the immediate disciples of Luther. We generally quote through Audin or D'Aubigné, unless the contrary be indicated, in loco.

† Glossa in Edict. Imperiale. Opera Lat. tom. xx. Apud D'Aubigné, i, 172.

‡ Properly called the "scala santa," or "holy stairway;" from having been once consecrated by the Saviour's footsteps, while he was entering into the pretorium, to be judged by Pilate.

turned reformer. This we, however, apprehend was an after-thought. Certain it is that, to get rid of the conclusive argument against this cardinal doctrine drawn from the Epistle of St. James, he rejected this Epistle "as one of straw;" and that, to confirm this his favorite principle still more, he boldly corrupted the text of St. Paul—(Romans iii: 28) "For we account a man to be justified by faith without the works of the law"—by adding the word *alone* after *faith*: and that, when challenged on the subject, he made this characteristic reply: "So I will—so I order. Let my will stand for a reason."\*—So much had he this doctrine at heart!

He pushed this tenet to the utmost extremes, and boldly avowed all the consequences which logically flowed therefrom. With him, faith was every thing; works were nothing. On the 1st of August, 1521, he wrote from the Wartburg a letter to Melancthon, from which the following is an extract: "Sin, and sin boldly; but let your faith be greater than your sin. It is enough for us, through the riches of the glory of God, to have known the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Sin will not destroy in us the reign of the Lamb, although we were to commit fornication or murder a thousand times in one day."† In his "Treatise on Christian Liberty," which he sent along with a most brutal letter to Leo X.,‡ in 1520, "as a pledge of his filial piety and love," he lays down the following as doctrines founded on the gospel: "The incompatibility of faith with works, which he

---

\* "Sic volo, sic jubeo, stat pro ratione voluntas." He added: "I wish I had also said, 'without *any* of the works, of *all* laws!'"

† "Sufficit quod agnovimus per divitias gloriæ Dei Agnum qui tollit peccatum mundi: ab hoc non avellet nos peccatum etiamsi millies uno die fornicemur aut occidamus."—Epist. Melanc. 1 Aug. 1521. Apud Audin, p. 178.

‡ See this savage letter in Audin, p. 110, 111. It was written before the papal bull had been issued, shortly after his conference with Miltitz, in which he had given and received the kiss of peace!! This truculent epistle was dated April 6, 1520, whereas the bull of excommunication was dated on the 15th of June following. This is clearly proved by Roscoe and Audin. See Dublin Review, art. Luther, for Sept., 1855.

regarded as so many sins; the subjection of the creature to the demon, even when he endeavors to escape from him; and his identification with sin, even when he rises towards his Creator, when his hand distributes alms, when his lips open to pray, or invoke a blessing, and even when he weeps and repents, he sins: 'for,' says he, 'all that is in us is crime, sin, damnation, and man can do nothing good.'"<sup>\*</sup> On the contrary, sin is not imputed to those who have faith: "Because," says he, "although I have sinned, Christ who is within me has not sinned: this Christ, in whom I believe, acts, thinks, and lives in me, and alone accomplishes the law."<sup>†</sup>

Another cardinal doctrine of Luther's, much akin to this, was the denial of free will, and the assertion that all our actions are the result of stern fatalism. He wrote a work expressly on "the slave will,"<sup>‡</sup> and carried on a rude controversy with Erasmus on this subject. His principles in this respect are explicitly, openly, and unblushingly avowed. According to him, free will is incompatible with the divine foreknowledge. "Let the Christian know, then, that God foresees nothing in a contingent manner; but that He foresees, proposes, and acts from his eternal and unchangeable will. This is the thunder-stroke which breaks and overturns free will."<sup>§</sup> God is thus plainly the author of sin, and Luther shrinks not from the avowal! He maintains "that God excites us to sin, and produces sin in us:"<sup>||</sup> and that "God damns some who have not merited this lot, and others before they were born."<sup>¶</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> Apud Audin, p. 111.

<sup>†</sup> Ibid. See *Epistola Lutheriana ad Leonem summum Pontificem. Liber de Libertate Christiana.* Wittenb. 1520, 4to.

<sup>‡</sup> "De Servo Arbitrio," in opposition to the usual term, "liberum arbitrium."

<sup>§</sup> De Servo Arbit. adv. Erasm. Roterod. Luth. Opp. Lat. Jenæ, tom. iii, p. 170, seqq.

<sup>||</sup> Opera, Jenæ, iii, 199. Wittenb. tom. fol. 522, 523. "Dass Gott die menschen zur sünde antreibe, und alle laster in ihnen würcke."

<sup>¶</sup> Ibid. Jenæ edit. iii, 207—Witt. vi, 534, 535—Altenb. iii, 249, 250.

Man's nature, according to him, is thoroughly and radically corrupt: he is a mere automaton. "Man is like a beast of burden: if God sits in the saddle, he wills and goes whithersoever God wills; . . . if Satan ride him, he wills and goes whither Satan directs: nor is it in his power to determine his rider—the two riders contend for obtaining and possessing him."\*—This is truly a characteristic illustration of a most hideous doctrine!

In his famous speech at the diet of Worms, in 1521, he expressed his delight at the prospect that his doctrine would produce discord and dissension: "You must know that I have well weighed the dangers that I incur, the displeasure that I cause, and the hatred which my doctrine will excite in this world. I delight to see the word of God bring forth discord and dissension. This is the lot of the Saviour, who says: 'I am come not to bring peace but the sword; I am come to separate the son from the father.'"<sup>†</sup>—Was there ever a more fiendish joy, or a more glaring perversion of God's holy word?

He rejected continence with horror, and looked on the law of celibacy as an "awful blindness—a relentless cruelty of the Pope—a diabolical precept—an imposing of an obligation which is impossible to human nature."<sup>‡</sup> In 1522 he wrote a letter to the knights of the Teutonic order, in which he urged them, by arguments pandering to the basest passions of the human heart, to rid themselves of this "diabolical" yoke. We almost shrink from transcribing the following passage from this appeal, which was alas! too successful. "My friends, the

\* "Sic humana voluntas in medio posita est ceu jumentum: si insederit Deus, vult et vadit sicut vult Deus; . . . si insederit Satan, vult et vadit sicut Satan: nec est in ejus arbitrio ad utrum sessorem currere, aut eum quærere, sed ipsi sessores certant ad ipsum obtinendum et possidendum." Opera, Jenæ, iii, 176, 177.

† Apud Audin, p. 163. D'Aubigné, ii, 235.

‡ "Perinde facere qui continenter vivere instituunt, ac si quis excrementa vel lotium contra naturæ impetum retinere velit." Luther. Contra falsa Edicta Cæsaris, T. ii.

precept of multiplying is older than that of continence enjoined by the councils" (and he should have added, sanctioned by the most solemn vows, voluntarily made, the binding obligation of which he himself had recognized but one year before\*): "it dates from Adam. It would be better to live in concubinage than in chastity. Chastity is an unpardonable sin; whereas concubinage, with God's assistance, should not make us despair of salvation."†

He rejected in fact every doctrine, and abolished every practice of the Catholic Church, which was humbling to human pride, painful to corrupt nature, or which imposed a salutary restraint on the passions. Confession he rejected, as the "executioner of consciences."‡ He eschewed monastic vows, fasting and abstinence, and proscribed good works and free will. In his new-fangled system of religion, the ministers of God were no longer bound to say Mass, or to read the divine office; this would have been an intolerable burden, incompatible with Christian liberty! In fact, he was no great advocate for prayer at all—especially for frequent prayer: "For," he says, "it is enough to pray once or twice; since God has said 'ask and you shall receive;' to continue always in prayer, is to show that we have not faith in God."§ He forgot to mention that Christ had also said: "Pray always and faint not:" and St. Paul, "Pray without intermission."

What, in fine, was left in his new system of Christianity to fulfill those essential conditions of discipleship, which our blessed Lord pointed out, when he said: "If any man will come after me, let him *deny himself* and *take up his cross*, and follow me?"|| Or to imitate the example of St. Paul—whose great admirer Luther affected to be—when he said of

\* Supra, p. 95.

† "In statu scortationis vel peccati, Dei præsidio implorato, de salute non desperandum."—Ad Milites Ord. Teutonici, Opp. Jenæ, tom. ii, p. 211–216.

‡ Conscientiæ carnificina.

§ Letter to Bartholemew Von Starenburg; 1 Sept., 1523.—Audin, p. 208.

|| Matth. xvi: 24.

himself: "I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become reprobate?"\*

D'Aubigné, though he professes to give a very detailed history of the Reformation, found it *convenient*, however, to forget, or at least to pretermit most of the facts related above; which, however, are essential to the history! But they did not suit his purpose, which was to persuade the world, that Luther and his associates were new apostles of God, and that the Reformation was but "the re-appearance of Christianity!" His whole view, in fact, of Luther's doctrine, and of the entire Reformation, is a miserable perversion of history—an ill-contrived romance. His picture is no doubt viewed with delight by those for whose special benefit it was drawn; but it is false in almost every light and shade! Else why did he omit so many essential facts?†

What was the necessary tendency of these new doctrines of Luther? Were they calculated to effect a reform in morals and religion? Or was their influence on society essentially evil? To aid us in answering these questions, we will adduce the evidence of a contemporary official document of the Germanic empire—an extract from the decree of the diet of Worms in 1521—which decree D'Aubigné professes to give us entire:‡

"The Augustine monk, Martin Luther, regardless of our exhortations, has madly attacked the holy Church, and attempted to destroy it, by writings full of blasphemy. He has shamefully vilified the unalterable law of holy marriage; he has labored to excite the laity to imbrue their hands in the blood of their priests;§ and, defying all authority, has incessantly excited the people to revolt, schism, war, murder, theft, incendiarism, and the utter destruction of the Christian faith. . . . In a word, and passing over many

\* 1 Corinth. ix: 27.

† In this respect he is not alone, but as one of a class. In fact, he is occasionally more candid than some other writers of his school.

‡ Vol. ii, p. 261 seqq.

§ The Diet here cites Luther's works; and D'Aubigné furnishes the reference to the present works of the reformer.—Luther Opp. Lat. xvii, 598.

other evil intentions, this being, who is no man, but Satan himself, under the semblance of a man in a monk's hood, has collected in one offensive mass all the worst heresies of former ages, adding his own to the number."

Making all proper allowance for the circumstance that this document emanated from a body the majority of which was opposed to Luther, it still presents a satisfactory proof of the evil tendency of his doctrines. Would the great Charles V., would the first princes of the empire, in an official document, have stated facts at random, and without sufficient warrant? They were surely competent witnesses of events passing under their very eyes; they could scarcely be deceived, and they would scarcely have hazarded false and groundless statements which could have been so readily refuted. Moreover, it must not be lost sight of, that Luther had powerful friends at Worms, who showed every disposition to see justice done to him, and to prevent his being overcome by oppression. Besides the powerful Frederick of Saxony, four hundred nobles swore to stand by him, and two thousand people gathered around him for his defense, and escorted him to his lodgings.\* He was certainly in little danger at Worms, and there was little wonder that his courage was aroused where he had clearly so little to fear.

But, if the doctrines of Luther were certainly not adapted to the reformation of the Church, they were at least easy and flattering to human nature; and, under this point of view, they were powerful means of rapidly diffusing the pretended Reformation which was predicated on them. Luther could hope, through their instrumentality, to gain over to his party the wicked of every class in society. To the corrupt among the priests and monks, he held out the inducements of getting rid of the painful duties of their state, of bidding adieu to vigils, to matins and to prayers, and of crowning their apostasy with the blooming garlands of hymen! To the unmortified,—and these were a very large class—he

---

\* Menzel, sup. cit. ii, 230-1.



promised exemption from confession, from fasts and from long prayers. To the proud and presumptuous,—and their number was legion—he offered the flattering principle of private judgment in matters of religion; assuring them, that every one, no matter how stupid or ignorant, had an equal right, with the learned and the talented, to expound the Scriptures for himself.

How consoling this assurance to the old lady, who, sitting in the chimney corner, had been hitherto content to con her prayers in private, to abide by the decisions of the Church, which Christ had solemnly commanded her to hear, under penalty of being reckoned “with heathens and publicans,” and to leave the thorny paths of theological controversy to the more skillful and learned! She awoke to a new life, her eyes sparkling again with the joys of youth, and she no doubt burst forth into a canticle of praise to the Lord, for her emancipation from the degrading servitude of popery! And, what bright careers of glory were opened to the ambition of young theological students in the universities, who, through the new doctrines, could hope to shine in the pulpit, and to settle themselves advantageously in the world, with their newly acquired wives and families: and all this without any very remarkable sacrifice, or any great previous labor in preparing themselves for the ministry! Verily, as Melancthon had said to his dying mother: “The way of the reformers was more convenient”—and what mattered it, “if that of the Catholics was more safe!” This was a consideration of minor importance; or of weight only at the hour of death! And what thought *they* of death?

But the chief resource of Luther, for establishing and consolidating his new religion, lay in the fostering protection of princes. He understood this, and he accordingly determined to gain them over to his party, by the most immoderate flattery, and by pandering to their worst passions. The great and moderate Frederick Von Schlegel assures us of this, and his testimony, in itself valuable, is fully confirmed by the

facts and corroborated by that of all trustworthy historians, whether Catholic or Protestant:

"Luther was by no means an advocate for democracy, like Zuinglius and Calvin,\* but he asserted the absolute power of princes, though he made his advocacy subservient to his own religious views and projects. It was by such conduct and the influence which he thereby acquired, as well as by the sanction of the civil power, that the Reformation was promoted and consolidated. Without this, Protestantism would have sunk into the lawless anarchy which marked the proceedings of the Hussites, and to which the war of the peasants rapidly tended; and it would have been inevitably suppressed, like all other popular commotions."†

The whole history of the Reformation proves the justice of these remarks. Luther thoroughly understood his true policy in regard to princes, and he never failed to carry it out. Even as late as 1530, when Charles V. was about to enter Augsburg to attend the diet assembled there, he cherished hopes of gaining over this great emperor to his party. In his letters and other writings about this time, he painted Charles V. "as a man of God, an envoy of heaven, a new Augustus, the admiration and delight of the whole world."‡ But when the emperor published at that same diet his famous conciliatory decree, by which he merely allowed to the Protestants the free "enjoyment of their temples and creeds," but enjoined silence on them until the meeting of the general council, the whole scene suddenly changed. Charles was no longer "a new Augustus:" but "he and his counselors were not even men, but 'gates of hell'—judges who could not judge his cause, and to whom he would not give up a hair of his head."§

To understand better how Luther was able so successfully to avail himself of the political circumstances of the times, and to play off so skillfully the German emperor and the

---

\* We shall see in the sequel what kind of "advocates for democracy" they were.

† *Philosophy of History*; vol. ii, p. 205, 6: edit. Appleton & Co., New York, 1841.

‡ See the authorities quoted by Audin, p. 440.

§ Ibid.

German princes against the Pope, we must glance at the condition of Germany in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and especially at its political relations with Italy and with the Roman Pontiffs. Without this view, it might be more or less difficult to explain the rapid diffusion of the Reformation in Germany; with it, the explanation becomes exceedingly easy, and our only wonder is, that the movement was not even more rapid and more general.

The political condition of Germany at this time happened to be entirely favorable to Luther and his partisans. As we have already seen on the authority of Roscoe, Pope Julius II. had, to a great extent, succeeded in driving the armies of the French and German invaders from the Italian soil. Faithful to the traditions of the Papacy, he had thrown the entire influence of his elevated position in the scale of Italian independence. It was but a renewal, in another shape, of the old struggle between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines: the former of whom contended, under the auspices of the Popes, for the freedom of Italy; the latter, under that of the German emperors, for foreign and especially for German domination over Italy.

But, if Julius succeeded in securing the gratitude of the Italians, his action naturally provoked the enmity of the French, and more particularly of the Germans; for he had expelled the armies of both from Italy. Accordingly, we find that Guicciardini, an hereditary Ghibelline and a dignitary of the Germanic empire, was among the most bitter enemies of the Pontiff, whose character he has sought to render infamous through his writings. The king of France and the emperor of Germany, foiled by the active vigilance of Julius in their ambitious designs on Italy, became the sworn enemies of the Pontiff, whose anathemas they had justly incurred on account of their attempts to invade the rights of the Holy See. In 1510, Louis XII. of France proposed, and the emperor Maximilian of Germany accepted, the project of convening a schismatical council, the object of which was to

depose the Pope, and to elect another who would be more pliable to their unhallowed policy. Such a council was actually convened by the emperor at Pisa in the following year; but it seems to have had no particular results, beyond giving forth an unmistakable indication of a growing disaffection towards the Holy See, and particularly towards the then reigning sovereign Pontiff.

Maximilian, true to the traditions of Germany, since the days of Barbarossa, still cherished his mad scheme of conquering Italy. The Protestant historian of the house of Austria—Coxe—speaking of the religious condition and feelings of Germany towards the close of the fifteenth century, says:

“The spiritual power of the Popes had gradually declined, and their authority had lost most of its influence. Germany had, in a public diet, declared itself independent of the Pope, and even the minor princes of Europe disregarded or despised the thunders of the Vatican. At the same time, the dominions of the Roman See were nearly confined to the neighborhood of Rome, and of those ample possessions which had been granted or confirmed by the emperors, the principal part had been appropriated by powerful families.”\*

After Julius had retrieved the tottering fortunes of the Roman principality, Maximilian of Germany and Louis of France united their councils and forces for the conquest of Italy; and in 1510, as Coxe tells us, the emperor “revived the ancient disputes between the Church and the Empire, by laying before the diet a list of grievances which the German nation had suffered from the exactions and pretensions of the Popes.”† These pretended exactions referred chiefly to the old disputes about Church patronage and the nomination to benefices, which had grown out of the controversy on Investitures; in which, as we have already sufficiently shown, the Popes were clearly in the right and the German emperors as clearly in the wrong. The rapacious princes of Germany

---

\* History of the House of Austria, i, 297; quoted in Dublin Review, for Sept., 1855.

† Ibid.

wished to rule supreme both in Church and State; and they were particularly sensitive on the subject of money going out of Germany to the Holy See, no matter how ancient had been the custom which authorized it, or how reasonable the motives in which it had originated.

Thus, at the time of Luther's appearance on the arena of the Reformation, every thing was already ripe for the great rebellion which he meditated. The emperor, his supreme sovereign, was a declared enemy of the Papacy; while his immediate prince, the elector of Saxony, was, moreover, strongly inclined, for other special reasons, to favor the new gospel, and to promote its interests to the utmost extent of his power. And we must bear in mind, that the elector was, after the emperor, at that time the most powerful prince in Germany. On the death of Maximilian, he had been selected to hold the reins of government, as vicar of the empire, until the election of the imperial successor, Charles V.; and he moreover continued in this position of power and influence for nearly a year and a half afterwards—until the coronation of Charles in October, 1520.\* Thus, at the very time that Luther was beginning his revolt, the empire was passing through a most critical crisis, and every thing was highly favorable to the designs of the reformer, whose powerful secret or open friends and patrons were, at the same time, enemies of the Pope and were clothed with supreme power in the state.

As Coxe informs us, Maximilian, "far from opposing the first attacks of Luther against indulgences, was pleased with his spirit and acuteness, declared that he deserved protection, and treated his adversaries with contempt and ridicule."† He warmly recommended the refractory monk to the elector of Saxony, saying that "there might come a time when he would be needed."‡

---

\* Maximilian had died miserably in January, 1519.

† History of the House of Austria, i, 387, *ibid*.

‡ Ranke, History of Popes, etc., i, 65, *ibid*.

There was little seeming need for this recommendation; for Frederick was already his patron and protector, and he had already openly taken sides in his favor, by prohibiting Tetzel from preaching the indulgences within the boundaries of Saxony. It was he who gave Luther the hint to begin the bold crusade of denunciation against the papal preacher of the indulgences; and the refractory monk understood full well that he incurred little risk in preaching against Tetzel under so ample a guaranty of protection.\*

The theses which Luther posted up on the doors of the church of All Saints at Wittenberg, on the first day of November, 1517, were drawn up with consummate art; and without boldly attacking the doctrine itself, they appealed with much tact to the passions of the German people, and to their old-time prejudices against the Holy See on the subject of money. Among them, for example, were these: "Why does not the Pope, who is richer than Croesus, build St. Peter's *with his own money*, rather than with that of poor Christians?"—"Christians should be taught that he who gives to the poor, or assists the needy, does better than he who purchases indulgences."† Such propositions as these comprised precisely the topics which would be the best calculated to excite popular interest and arouse popular feeling. They were also the very points which were most likely to prove acceptable to the elector, who had already refused to receive Tetzel, who strongly opposed every scheme which would in any manner cause money to go out of his territory, especially if it were directed towards Rome, and who panted himself after the rich spoils of the Church—which he, in fact, shortly afterwards sacrilegiously grasped.

One who will be regarded by Protestants as an unexceptionable witness, Wolfgang Menzel, fully confirms the view which we have here presented. He says:

---

\* Ranke tells us that, "an alliance had been formed between the monk of Wittenberg and the sovereign of Saxony." History of the Reformation, A. D. 1517.

† Apud Audin, in loco.

"The old emperor Maximilian had, exactly at that period (A. D. 1518,) opened a diet at Augsburg, at which several of the princes and cities complained of the sale of indulgences and of other ecclesiastical disorders; and the emperor, deeming it politic to make use of Luther as a means of humbling the Pontiff, and of compelling him to retract some of his inordinate (!) demands, refused to deliver him up, although he had been cited to appear at Rome."\*

The same prejudiced writer, in a single sentence, furnishes us with a key to all of Luther's movements, as also to explain the favor with which they were regarded by many of the princes of the German empire. He says, that Luther "*cherished an almost biblical reverence for the anointed of the Lord, by whose aid he hoped to succeed in reforming the Church.*"† This, translated into popular language, simply means, that he was devoted to the doctrine of the divine right of kings, and consequently opposed to all those modern ideas of popular freedom, of which he has been usually heralded forth as the champion. Never was there a greater popular delusion than that which holds that Luther was the advocate of popular liberty; as we hope to show by incontestable evidence in the proper place. For the present, suffice it to say, that he relied for success, not on the *people*, but on the strong arm of the princes; and that the latter warmly seconded his views, which were so evidently to their own advantage.

Menzel, in fact, tells us as much, when he writes:

"To the numerous nobility of the empire in Swabia, Franconia, and the Rhenish provinces, the opening Reformation presented a favorable opportunity for *improving their circumscribed political position, seizing the rich lands belonging to the Church*, and raising themselves to an equality with, if not deposing the temporal princes."‡

Again; speaking of the failure of the attempt made by Melancthon to bring about a reunion with the Catholic Church at the diet of Augsburg, and of the reason of the failure, he writes:

\* History of Germany, Bohn's edition, ii, 226.

† Ibid., p. 233.

‡ Ibid., p. 234.

"A last attempt, made by Melancthon, and supported by Luther,\* to bring about a general reformation in the Church by means of the Pope, with the view of securing the Church from the temporal princes, failed, owing to the extreme demoralization of the clergy,† and Luther was speedily reduced to silence by the princes *intent upon the secularization of the bishoprics.*"‡—That is, upon seizing by violence the property which supported the bishoprics and appropriating it to secular, or what was the same thing, to their own uses.

We must furnish one more extract from Menzel on this subject, which is more remarkable than any thing we have so far presented from his pages; as it candidly avows the carnal and wicked motives which prompted the princes of the earth to side with Luther and to oppose the Church of God, not only in Germany but elsewhere; and as it dissipates forever the usually received and popular idea, that Luther was a champion of freedom. He is speaking of the period which immediately followed the suppression of the popular insurrections in Germany, usually called the war of the peasants—of which we shall treat more fully in a subsequent chapter.

"The defeat of the nobility and peasantry had crushed the revolutionary spirit in the people; and the Reformation, stripped of its terrors, began to be regarded as advantageous by the princes. Luther also appeared, not as a dangerous innovator, but in the light of a *zealous upholder of princely power, the divine right of which he even made an article of faith*; and thus, through Luther's well meant policy, the Reformation, the cause of the people(!), naturally became that of the princes, and consequently instead of being the aim, was converted into a *means of their policy*. In England, Henry VIII. favored the Reformation for the sake of becoming pope in his own dominions, and of giving unrestrained license to tyranny and caprice.

---

\* He is here egregiously mistaken. Luther strongly opposed the reconciliation, as we have already shown. See his angry correspondence on the subject with Melancthon and others in Audin. With his subserviency to princes, Luther would not have dared thwart them in their darling project of robbing the Church.

† Brought about precisely by the corrupt usurpation of church patronage by the secular princes, as we have shown. See Introduction.

‡ History of Germany, Bohn's edition, ii, p. 251.



In Sweden, Gustavus Wasa embraced the Lutheran faith, as a wider mark of distinction between the Swedes and Danes, whose king Christiern he had driven out of Sweden. His example was followed (A. D. 1527) by the grand-master Albert of Prussia, who hoped by this means to render that country an hereditary possession in his family. His cousin, the detestable Casimir Von Culmbach, sought to wipe out the memory of his parricide by his confession of the new faith.”\*

Thus, according to the open avowal of even the bigoted Menzel, the great German Reformation dwindles down into a mere affair of groveling avarice and of worldly ambition on the part of the princes; and Luther, the arch-reformer, the bold adversary of the Pope, and the vaunted champion of liberty, sinks down into the position of a mere crouching and subservient tool of rapacious and unprincipled men, who sought only their own interests, and who wished to lord it over their subjects with supreme power both in church and in state! In casting off the yoke of Rome, the German people had another riveted on their necks, which was infinitely more galling; and they have had to bear it ever since!

We have already seen how meanly subservient Luther was on all occasions to his immediate sovereign, the elector of Saxony. This prince was the most powerful protector of the Reformation, and, as we shall see, he reaped a golden harvest for his protection. But he had another motive for defending Luther and his partisans. Luther and Melancthon were the principal professors in his newly founded and warmly cherished university of Wittenberg; and their varied learning and shining talents had attracted to it vast numbers of youth from all parts of Germany. At the period of the Reformation, this university became the focus of the new doctrines, and the rendezvous of all who favored them. The attractive novelty, the stirring interest, the startling boldness of the newly broached theories of religion, together with the rude but overpowering eloquence of Luther, and the winning graces and versatile genius of Melancthon, rendered this new seat

---

\* History of Germany, Bohn's edition, ii, p. 248.

of learning famous throughout Germany. The powerful elector could not but look with complacency on the men who shed such lustre on an institution which he had erected, and the prosperity of which was identified with his own glory. This was one of the reasons which first inclined him to favor Luther. It is not a little remarkable, too, that this same university of Wittenberg was erected chiefly from the proceeds of those very indulgences, the inveighing against which was the first movement of the Reformation!

A remarkable instance of Luther's mean subserviency to princes, is the permission which he and his chief partisans gave to Philip, landgrave of Hesse, to have two wives at once! This fact is as astounding as it is undoubted. Philip had been married for sixteen years to Christiana, daughter of George, duke of Saxony; and he had already been blessed with several children. According to Adolph Menzel, a Protestant historian, he was "violent and passionate, unfaithful and superstitious."\* But he was a good Lutheran, nay, one of the most powerful friends of the Reformation; and he read his Bible incessantly. He became enamored of Margaret Saal, a maid of honor to his sister Elizabeth. She proved inexorable, and the landgrave lost his appetite, and was seized with a fit of despondency. In this distress, he had recourse to his Bible: he opened it at the fifth chapter of Genesis, and, finding that Lamech had two wives at once, he resolved to imitate his example!

He, however, thought it advisable to seek counsel on a subject of so much importance—particularly to himself—from the principal reformers. Through Martin Bucer, a learned *reformed* theologian, and a devoted courtier and tool of himself, he proposed his case of conscience to the new apostles at Wittenberg. He stated his sad case very roundly and very simply, as became so godly and scrupulous a champion of the new gospel: "That he could not abstain from fornication, and that

---

\* Adolph Menzel, *Neure Geschichte der Deutschen*, tom. i.

he must expect eternal damnation unless he changed his life: that, when he espoused Christiana, it was not through inclination or love: that the officers of his court and her maids of honor might be examined regarding her temper, *her charms*, and her love of wine: that he had read in the Old Testament how many holy personages, Abraham, Jacob, David, and Solomon, had many wives, and yet pleased God: and that, finally, he had resolved to renounce his licentious habits, which he could not do, unless he could get Margaret for his wife. He therefore asked Luther and Philip (Melancthon) to grant him what he requested."

The case was plainly and fully stated; and the answer was no less direct. It was divided into twenty-four articles, and was signed by the eight principal reformers of Wittenberg; Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, Anthony Corvin, Adam, I. Leningen, J. Vinfert, and D. Melanther. The twenty-first article runs as follows:

"If your highness is resolved to marry a second wife, we judge that it should be done privately, as we have said when speaking of the dispensation you have asked for. There should be no one present, but the bride and a few witnesses who are aware of the circumstance, and who would be bound to secrecy, as if under the seal of confession. Thus all opposition and great scandal will be avoided; for it is not unusual for princes to have concubines, and although the people take scandal at it, the more enlightened will suspect the truth. We ought not to be very anxious about what the world will say, provided the conscience be at rest. Thus we approve of it. Your highness has then, in this writing, our approbation in all the exigencies that may occur, as also the reflections we have made on them."

The marriage took place on the 3d of March, 1540, in the presence of Melancthon, Bucer, and other theologians. The marriage contract was drawn up by a Lutheran doctor, and duly signed by a notary public. In this instrument Philip declares, "that he does not take Margaret lightly, or through contempt of the civil law; but solely for other considerations, and because, without a second wife, he could not live godly, or merit heaven!"\* Was there ever a more startling instance

---

\* See the *Instrumentum Copulationis Philippi landgrave et Margaritæ de*

of utter depravity and of unprincipled sycophancy! Here, then, is a Protestant *indulgence*, in the very worst sense attached to the term by Protestant writers! And yet these men claimed to be sent by God to reform the Church!!\*

By such unhallowed means as these did the reformers secure the protection of princes. What was the character of such of the latter as espoused the Reformation? Were they men whose lives reflected honor on the new religion, and gave a pledge of the purity of the motives which had led to its adoption? Let us see. We have already glanced at the character of some of these men, in company with Wolfgang Menzel. We will now speak of others. In the first place, there was John, elector of Saxony, who, according to Menzel,† was one of the most gluttonous princes of his age, fond of wine and of good cheer, and whose stomach, overcharged with excessive feeding, was supported by an iron circle. “He had enriched his sideboard—the best furnished in all Germany—with vessels of all sorts taken from the refectories of the monasteries, or the sacristies of the churches.”‡ He accordingly embraced

---

Saal, given in full by Bossuet, *Variations*, vol. i. See also Ad. Menzel, a Protestant, tom. ii, p. 179, 192; and Audin, p. 479.

\* Those who wish to see all the documents connected with this disgraceful proceeding, are referred to Bossuet's *Variations*, book vi, and to Bayle's *Dictionary*, art. Luther. They were kept hidden for a long time, until Charles Lewis, the elector palatine, published them to the world. There is no doubt whatever as to their genuineness. Hallam fully admits this, in his *Constitutional History of England*. Bayle twits the reformers on their mean subserviency to the landgrave; who, he shrewdly suspects, had thrown out “certain menaces” in case of their refusal to grant the asked for dispensation, and had made them certain munificent promises in case of their compliance. The latter he fully redeemed; for after the death of Frederick, the elector of Saxony, in 1525, he became the great Ajax of the Reformation party in Germany. D'Aubigné admits this.

We consider the documents connected with this disgraceful affair of sufficient importance in a history of the Reformation, to authorize their being republished in full, which we do accordingly in note C. at the end of the present volume.

† Ad. Menzel, *Neuere Geschichte*, tom. i, fol. 338. ‡ Audin, p. 424.

with eagerness a religion which had abolished fasting, and which permitted him to indulge his favorite appetite without restraint. Then came the *pious* and *scrupulous* Philip, landgrave of Hesse, whose troubled conscience was soothed by the panacea to which we have just alluded. This second great pillar of the Reformation had inscribed on the clothes of the domestics who served him at table, the initials V. D. M. I. Æ., signifying *Verbum Domini manet in æternum*—"the word of the Lord remaineth forever!" Lastly came Wolfgang, prince of Anhalt, whose stupid ignorance was proverbial: and finally "Ernest and Francis Lunenberg, who did not trouble their vassals to pillage the churches, but with their own hands despoiled the tabernacles of their sacred vessels."\* Such were the princes to whose patronage the Reformation was indebted for its first success and subsequent permanency!

To secure their coöperation and protection, which were essential to the triumph of his cause, Luther left no means untried. He recklessly appealed to the worst passions which sway the human bosom. He held out to them, as baits, the rich booty of the Catholic churches and monasteries. He said to them, in a publication entitled *Argyrophilax*:† "You will find out, within a few months, how many hundred thousand gold pieces the monks and that class of men possess within a small portion of your territory."‡ He acknowledged, in one of his sermons, "that the church ostensories made many converts to the new gospel."§ And M. Audin is entirely correct in his caustic remark: "That the convent spoils resembled the martyrs' blood, mentioned by

---

\* Audin, p. 425.

† "Guardian of the Treasury."

‡ "Experiemini intra paucos menses, quot centum aureorum millia unius exiguæ ditionis vestræ monachi et id genus hominum possideant."—Cf. Cochläus, p. 149.

§ "Viele sind noch gut evangelisch, weil es noch Catholische monstranzen gibt."—Luther, Præd. xii, apud Jak. Marx, p. 174, and Ad. Menzel, tom. i, pp. 371-9. Apud Audin.

Tertullian, and brought forth daily new disciples to the Reformation.”\*

It was cupidity, as we have already shown from W. Menzel, that induced Albert of Brandenburg to apostatize from the Catholic Church, “that he might plunder, with a safe conscience, the country of Prussia, which belonged to the Teutonic order”—of which order he was superior general—“and which he erected into a hereditary principality.”† Francis Von Sickingen was another of these spoilers, who, at the head of twelve thousand men, “invaded the archbishopric of Treves, tracking his path by the blood he shed, the churches he pillaged, and the licentious excesses of his soldiery.”‡ He was but one of those powerful church robbers who, according to the testimony of an ancient historian, then converted Germany, once so powerful and noble, into a den of sacrilegious thieves.§ The candid Melancthon “avowed that in the triumph of the Reformation the princes looked not to the purity of doctrine, or the propagation of light, to the triumph of a creed, or the improvement of morals, but only regarded the profane and miserable interests of this world.”||

The rich spoils of the Catholic Church and of the monasteries not only induced many princes of the Germanic body to embrace the Reformation, but also caused them to persevere in the cause they had thus espoused. In the famous diet of Augsburg, in 1530, the conciliatory course of Melancthon, who there represented the reformed party, bade fair to heal the rupture, by reconciling the Protestants to the Catholic Church. But the Catholic theologians insisted on two things: that the married priests should abandon their wives, and that the Protestant princes should restore the goods of the Church

\* Audin, p. 345. † Rotteck, p. 93. Apud Audin. Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

§ “Potentissima Germania et nobilissima, sed ea tota nunc unum latrocinium est, et ille inter nobiles gloriosior qui rapacior.”—Campanus ad Freher-Script. German., tom. ii, p. 294, 295.

|| “Sie becümmerten sich gar nicht um die lehre, es sie ihnen bloß um die freiheit, und die herrschaft zu thun.”—Apud Audin, p. 343.

upon which they had seized. The former condition would probably have been complied with; but, as Erasmus remarks, "the Lutheran princes would not hear any thing about restitution."\* The same insurmountable difficulty interposed when, five years later, Rome made her last effort towards bringing back the Protestant party to the bosom of the Catholic Church. The benevolent labors of Cardinal Verger, legate of Paul III., in 1535, might not have proved wholly abortive, but for the indomitable insolence of Luther,† and the refusal of the princes of his party to disgorge their ill-gotten plunder.

After all this, we can scarcely restrain a smile, on hearing the lamentations of Luther over the rapacity of the princes of his party, whom he himself had excited to the unholy work of spoliation. "To the d—l," he cried out in a rage, "with senators, manor lords, princes, and mighty nobles, who do not leave for the preachers, the priests, the servants of the gospel, wherewith to support their *wives* and *children*!"‡ They were, it seems, more rapacious than even *he* could have desired. "They gave, with admirable generosity, the sacred vessels of the secularized monastery to the parish priest, provided, however, he had adopted Lutheranism. The rest went to their mistresses, their courtiers, their dogs, and their horses. Some, who were as greedy as the landgrave of Hesse, kept even the habits and sacerdotal vestments, the tapestries, the chased silver vases, and the vessels of the sanctuary."§ They would not abide by Luther's seemingly reasonable rules for the partition of the confiscated property:‖ and hence the enkindled wrath of the reformer!

He, indeed, occasionally condemned this rapacity in a voice of thunder: he sometimes even clothed himself in the garb

---

\* "Res propemodum ad concordiam deducta est, nisi quod Lutherani principes nihil audire voluerunt de restituendo."—*Erasm. Ep.*, p. 998. This confirms the statement given above on the authority of Wolfgang Menzel.

† For an account of the outrageous conduct of Luther to the legate, and of the whole negotiation, see Audin, p. 474, seqq.

‡ Table Talk, cited by Jak. Marx, p. 175. § Audin, p. 346. ‖ Ibid.



of a messenger of peace, and bewailed the lawless violence and other sad disorders which he had himself occasioned, and even caused, by his frequent appeals to the lowest and most groveling passions. But he could not arrest the course of the turbid torrent of passion, which he himself had in the first instance caused to flow. As well might he have labored to turn back the waters of the Rhine! Had he not, in one of his inflammatory appeals to the princes of the empire, used the following language?—"There is Rome, Romagna, and the duchy of Urbino: there is Bologna, and the states of the Church; take them: they belong to you: take, in God's name, what is your own?"\* Had he not threatened them with the wrath of heaven, in case they did not seize on the property of the monasteries?† Had he not, on almost every page of his works, made "a brutal appeal against the priests, a maddening shout against the convents; in a word, had he not preached up the sanctification of robbery, the canonization of rapine?"‡

Erasmus bears abundant evidence to the violence which almost everywhere marked the progress of the Reformation in Germany. We will give an extract from one of his writings, premising the remark that he was an eye-witness of what he relates, and not at least a violent enemy of the reformers:

"I like to hear Luther say, that he does not wish to take their revenues from the priests and monks, who have not any other means of support. This is the case probably at Strasburg. But is it so elsewhere? Truly it is laughable to say: 'we will give food to those who apostatize; let others starve if they please. Still more laughable to hear them protest that they do not wish to harm any one. What! is it no injury to drive away canons from their churches, monks from their monasteries, and to plunder bishops and abbots?—But 'we do not kill!'—Why not? Because your victims take the prudent precaution of running away.—'We let our enemies live peaceably among us.'—Who are your enemies? Are all Catholics? Do our bishops and priests regard themselves as secure in the midst of you? If you

---

\* Opp. edit. Jenæ, tom. viii, fol. 209–248. A. D. 1545. Apud Audin.

† "Gottloss seyen dienigen die diese güter nicht an sich zögen, und sie besser verwendeten, als die mönche.

‡ Audin, p. 349.



are so mild and tolerant, wherefore these emigrations, and these multiplied complaints addressed to the throne? . . . But then, why destroy the churches which they built?"\*

It is curious to mark the mode of operating adopted by the pious reformers, while doing their godly work of violence and spoliation. We will furnish a few instances, out of many.

"At Bremen, during Lent, the citizens got up a masquerade, in which the Popes, the cardinals, and nuns were represented. On the place of public execution they raised a pile, on which all these personifications of Catholicity were thrown, and burnt, amidst shouts of joy. The remainder of the day was spent in celebrating, by large libations, the downfall of popery."†

"At Zwickau, on Shrove Tuesday, hare-nets were laid on the market-place; and monks and nuns, hunted by the students, fell into them, and were caught. At a short distance was the statue of St. Francis, tarred and feathered!" Tobias Schmidt, the cotemporary historian of this outrage, here exclaims: "Thus fell, at Zwickau, 'popery,' and thus rose there the pure light of the gospel!"‡ He assures us, in the same place, that "a band of citizens attacked the convent, whose gates they broke, and, when they had pillaged the chests and the treasures, threw the books about and broke the windows:"§ the town authorities, meantime, standing looking on, with their arms crossed, in perfect composure, without even affecting indignation! Similar scenes were enacted elsewhere. "At Elemberg, the pastor's house was given up for several hours to pillage; and one of the students, who was a conspicuous actor in this scene, which excited the laughter of the mob, clothed himself in priests' vestments, and made his entry on an ass into the church."||

\* "In Pseudo-Evangelicos." Epist. 47, lib. xxxi. London, Flesher.

† Arnold, l. c. th. 2, bd. 16, kap. 6, s. 60. Apud Audin, p. 347.

‡ "Also ist das Pabsthum abgeschafft und hingegen die evangelische reine lehre fortgeplantz worden." Tob. Schmidt, p. 386. Ibid.

§ Ibid., p. 374. Apud Adin, p. 348. || See "Das resultat meiner wanderungen," etc. Von Julius Höninghaus, p. 339; and Audin, *ibid.*

We must also briefly state the tactics of Luther's second great patron, John, elector of Saxony, while gallantly attacking a monastery of poor monks, or a convent of defenceless women. The noble elector, who had succeeded Frederick, did not seek to stain his victory with blood; he sought rather the spoils of war! M. Audin compares him very appropriately to Verres, the rapacious Roman proconsul of Sicily, whom Cicero lashed with his withering invective.

"The proconsul of Sicily was not more ingenious than Duke John of Saxony in plundering a monastery. Some days before opening the campaign, he was accustomed to send and demand the register of the house, and then he set out with a brisk detachment of soldiers. They surrounded the monastery; the abbot was summoned, and the prince, holding the registry in his hand, caused every thing contained in it to be delivered."\*

Wolfgang Menzel writes as follows of the "visitation" made by John of Saxony:

"The elector John, Luther's most zealous partisan, immediately on his accession to the government of Saxony, on the death of Frederick the Wise, empowered Luther to undertake a church visitation throughout his dominions, and to arrange ecclesiastical affairs according to the spirit of the doctrine he taught. His example was followed by the rest of the Lutheran princes; and this measure necessarily led to a separation from, instead of a thorough Reformation of the Church. The first step was the abolition of monasteries, and the confiscation of their wealth by the state, by which a portion was set apart for the extension of academies and schools. The monks and nuns were absolved from their vows, compelled to marry and follow a profession, etc."†

This illustrious example was duly followed up by the civil authorities at Rosteck, Torgau, and other places. An old chronicle of Torgau, printed in 1524, minutely describes the revolting particulars of a nocturnal excursion made to the Franciscan convent of the city, by Leonard Koeppe and some other young students, who made an open boast of their cruelty

---

\* Arnold, loc. cit. th. 2. Bd. 16, kap. 6, 568, cited by Höninghaus, *supra*.

† History Germany, *sup. cit.* ii, 248.

and profligacy on the occasion.\* At Magdeburg the magistrates resolved to act more humanely. They put a stop to the work of plunder, and allowed the monks to remain quietly in their cells during the rest of their lives; "Provided, however, they laid aside the religious habit, and embraced the Reformation:"† and many of them, alas! preferred apostasy to starvation!

Such as would not apostatize were, in most places, driven from their convents, "were reduced to beg their bread, and were the victims of heartless calumny. They seemed abandoned by all. Art was as ungrateful as mankind; it forgot that it owed its progress to their labors. The people laughed when they saw them pass half naked, and had no word of pity, no sigh of compassion, for so many unfortunate creatures. Whither could they go? The roads were not safe; in those times there were knights who scoured the high-ways and hunted after monks, whom they took pleasure"—in making eunuchs—"for the greater glory of God!"‡

With all these facts before our eyes, can we wonder at the testimony borne by the diet of Worms, quoted above, as to the character and tendency of the Lutheran doctrines? Even Protestants have acknowledged, that the Reformation was indebted mainly to this violence for its successful establishment in Germany and the countries of the north. We have already seen the testimony of Melancthon. Jurieu, the famous Calvinist minister, acknowledges "that Geneva, Switzerland, the republics and the free cities, the electors, and the German princes, England, Scotland, Sweden, and Denmark, got rid of 'popery,' and established the Reformation, by the aid of the civil power."§ A sweeping admission, truly, as candid as it is clearly founded on the facts of history!

The great Frederick Von Schlegel has well observed, that

\* Arnold, ut supra.

† Marcheineke, th. 2, s. 41. Audin, *ibid.*

‡ Ulrich Hutten boasts of this. Epist. ad Lutherum, part ii, p. 128. Cf. Audin, p. 200. § Cf. Jak. Marx. "Die Ursachen der Schnellen ver-

"Protestantism was the work of man; and that it appears in no other light, even in the history which its own disciples have drawn of its origin. The partisans of the Reformation proclaimed, indeed, at the outset, that, if it were more than a human work, it would endure, and that its duration would serve as a proof of its divine origin. But surely no one will consider this an adequate proof, when he reflects that the great Mohammedan heresy, which, more than any other, destroys and obliterates the divine image stamped on the human soul, has stood its ground for full twelve hundred years; though this religion [imposture], if it proceed from no worse source, is at best a human work."\*

He says also: "That the Reformation was established in Denmark chiefly, though not exclusively, as in Sweden, by the sovereign power: in Iceland its establishment was almost the work of violence."† True, he indicates the opinion that Protestantism was introduced into other German countries "by the torrent of popular opinion:"‡ but we have already seen what kind of a torrent this was; what ruins it left in its course; how its turbid waters were swollen by the storm of the rude eloquence of Luther and his partisans, and how its maddening current was lashed into fury by the lawless passions of the princes who espoused the cause of the Reformation, and fattened on its spoils.

We must again quote Wolfgang Menzel in regard to the practical operation of the new church, as organized in Germany, and the influence of the princes therein:

"The whole system of the church was simplified. The sequestered bishoprics were provisionally administered, and the affairs of the Lutheran church controlled by commissioners selected from among the reformers, and by the councils of the princes, *Luther incessantly promulgating the doctrine of the right of temporal sovereigns to decide all ecclesiastical questions.* His inten-

---

breitung der Reformation," p. 164; apud Audin, p. 343. The testimony of Jurieu is found quoted, with several others of the same kind, in Alzog's Church History.

\* "Philosophy of History," ii, 218.

† Ibid., p. 225.

‡ Ibid., 224.

tion was, the creation of a counterpoise to ecclesiastical authority, and he was probably far from imagining that religion might eventually be deprived of her dignity and liberty by temporal despotism. *Episcopal authority passed entirely into the hands of the princes.*"\*

Our summary of the means employed to promote the success of the Reformation would be incomplete, without advert- ing to one other cause which contributed, perhaps as much as any one of those already named, to produce this effect. We allude to the flagrant abuse of the press, which, during that period, poured forth a torrent of ridicule, invective, abuse, misrepresentation, and calumny against the Catholics, flooding all Germany with pestiferous publications. The violence of the pulpit powerfully seconded that of the press. Luther himself thundered incessantly from the pulpit of All Saints at Wittenberg, as well as from those of the other principal cities of Saxony. He lashed, with his burning invectives, Popes, bishops, priests, and monks: wherever his words fell they were as a consuming fire. Indefatigable in his exertions, he published book after book, inflammatory pamphlet after inflammatory pamphlet, against the pretended abominations of Rome. His books were eagerly sought after, and greedily devoured by the great and increasing numbers who had a prurient curiosity in such novelties, which to many were attractive, precisely in proportion to their novelty, and the startling boldness with which they were proclaimed. That "On the Captivity of Babylon," in which he painted the Pope as Antichrist, went rapidly through ten editions. The annual book-fairs at Leipsic and Frankfort never before presented so animated a spectacle, or drove so brisk a business.

The works of the champions of Catholicity—of Eck, Emser, Prierias, and Hochstraet—found not so ready a sale. They had not the overweening charm of novelty; they dealt not in such rude denunciations; they were not so replete with

---

\* History of Germany, ii, p. 249.

ridicule or vulgar conceits! Even the veteran Erasmus, who had been not long before styled "the prince of letters," "the star of Germany," "the high-priest of polite literature;" even the witty, and polished, and classical Erasmus could scarcely find purchasers for his *Hyperaspides* and other works which he published, after he had at length consented to enter the lists with Luther. His glory suddenly faded, and the book-publishers for the first time complained of having to keep his works on hand unsold!

Many causes contributed to this result. In that period of maddening excitement, nothing whatever seemed to suit the popular palate which was not new and startling. The calm and dignified defence of truth—alas! now grown antiquated and obsolete—could not cope with the exciting character and versatile graces of error. It has been ever so. Perverse human nature has at all times been inclined to relish most what is most agreeable to its passions. It more readily believes what is evil than what is good, especially when the former is served up with the winning graces of rhetoric, and seasoned with sarcasm, ridicule, and denunciation. Besides, the press sent forth the works of the reformers neatly and correctly printed; whereas those of the Catholics were often so clumsily executed as to excite ridicule and disgust. The principal booksellers had joined the reform party, and many of the apostate monks had exchanged their former occupation of transcribing manuscripts, for that of type-compositors and proof-readers in the principal printing establishments. The press thus became almost wholly subservient to the Protestant party; and the rebellious monks, treading in the footsteps of Luther, became the most zealous champions of the new opinions.

A Catholic book which passed through the hands of the Protestant printers was generally mutilated, or at least printed with great negligence. Cochlæus and others complain of this injustice. He says, that the works of Catholics were often so badly printed, that they did more service to the Lu-

theran party than to their own cause; and that the Frankfort merchants openly laughed at their clumsy execution.\*

Froben, the great bookseller of Basle, made a splendid fortune by selling the works of Luther, which he reproduced in every form, and published at the cheapest rates. In a letter to the reformer, he chuckles with delight over his success: "All your works are bought up; I have not ten copies on hand: never did books sell so well."† Erasmus, in a letter to Henry VIII. of England, complains that "he could find no printer who would dare publish any thing against Luther. Were it against the Pope," he adds, "there would be no difficulty."‡

The great Cardinal Bellarmine, who, towards the close of the sixteenth century, undertook the herculean task of refuting the works of the reformers—a task which he executed in a most masterly and triumphant manner—assures us, "that there were few among the Protestant party who did not write something, and that their books not only spread like a cancer, but that they were diffused over the land, like swarms of locusts."§ Books of every size, from the ponderous folio to the humbler pamphlet, were scattered through Germany on the wings of the press.

And what were the weapons which these productions wielded with so great and deadly effect? Were they those of sober truth and of sound argument? Or were they those of low abuse, scurrilous misrepresentation, and open calumny? If there is any truth in history, the latter were put in requi-

---

\* "Ea tamen neglectim, ita festinanter et vitiose imprimebant, ut majorem gratiam eo obsequio referrent Lutheranis quam Catholicis. Si quis eorum justiore Catholicis operam impenderent, hi a cæteris in publicis mercatibus Frankofordiæ ac alibi vexabantur et ridebantur, velut papistæ et sacerdotum servi."—Cochl. p. 58, 59. Apud Audin.

† Opp. Lutheri, tom. i, p. 388, 389. Ibid.

‡ Epist. Erasmi, p. 752. For further particulars, see Audin. p. 337, seqq.

§ "Rari sunt apud adversarios qui non aliquid scribunt, quorum libri non jam ut cancer serpunt, sed velut agmina locustarum volitant."—Opp. tom. i, de Controv. in Præfat.

sition much oftener than the former. Catholic doctrines travestied and misrepresented, Catholic practices ridiculed and caricatured, Catholic bishops and priests vilified and openly calumniated; these were the means which the reformers employed with so murderous an effect.\*

And though all the sins of these first champions of the pretended reform should not in justice be visited on their children in the faith, yet truth compels the avowal that, in these respects at least, the latter have not proved recreant disciples. This is still the panoply of Protestant warfare. We wish from our hearts it were otherwise! The poet's remark is true both of the first reformers and of their modern disciples, in the most of their writings against the Catholic Church:

"A hideous figure of their face they drew,  
Nor hues, nor looks, nor colors true:  
And this grotesque design exposed to public view."†

We shall here offer a few specifications, to prove that we have not done injustice to the character of the writings published by the early reformers. One means of attacking the character of the Catholics, was that of the Dialogue, invented by Ulrich von Hutten, one of the most unscrupulous writers

\* To calumny might be added forgery, which was not uncommon in the palmy days of the Reformation. In fact, Whitaker, a Protestant parson, says, in substance, that this was almost peculiar to the reformed party. We will allude to one notorious instance in Germany. Otho Pack, vice-chancellor of Duke George of Saxony, forged a pretended Catholic plot, which he professed to have learned by prying into the secrets of the duke. His forgery caused the elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse to take up arms, which they however laid down when the falsehoods of this wretch were detected. Still the forgery, though thus exposed, was greedily seized up, and published all over Germany; and there are yet several writers who speak of the conspiracy it had fabricated as the league of Passau! Titus Oates had a predecessor, it seems, in Germany, though he far surpassed him in wickedness. We must refer our readers to the pages of Audin for an account of this curious affair; vol. ii, p. 125, Turnbull's translation, London edition.

† Dryden.



of the reform party.. It consisted in introducing, with dramatic effect, the various distinguished men of both sides, the Catholic and the Protestant, and pretending to let them speak out their own respective sentiments. These dialogues were often acted on the stage, with great effect among the populace. The Catholics were travestied, and made to appear in the most ridiculous light; while their adversaries were always victorious. Two of these principal scenic representations were designed to ridicule two of the chief champions of Catholicity in Germany, Doctors Hochstraet and Eck. The lowest humor—with certain specimens of which we will not dare sully our pages—was employed against these distinguished divines.\* The result was, that they became objects of contempt throughout Germany. This was *one* way to answer their arguments, which it might have been difficult to answer in any other!

Every one, who has glanced at the history of those turbulent times, is familiar with the vulgar legends of the "Pope-Ass and Monk-Calf," published by Melancthon and Luther, and circulated with prodigious effect among the ignorant populace. The "Pope-Ass" was extracted from the bottom of the Tiber in 1494; and the "Monk-Calf," was discovered at Friburg, in Misnia, in 1523.† Lucas Kranach, a painter of the time, sculptured this vulgar conceit on wood; and this illustration accompanied the description of the two non-descript monsters. What surprises us most is, that the temperate Melancthon should have lent himself to this low ribaldry, which then passed current for wit.

Erasmus and other cotemporary writers openly accused the reformers of gross calumny. The former alleged many palpable facts to justify his charge.

\* The curious are referred, for copious extracts from these "dialogues," to Audin, p. 196, seqq.

† "Interpretatio duorum horribilium monstrorum," etc., per Philippum Melancthonem et Martinum Lutherum—inter Opp. Luth. tom. ii, p. 302.

"Those people are profuse of calumnies. They circulated a report of a canon, who complained of not finding Zurich as moral after the preaching of Zuinglius as before. . . . In the same spirit of candor they have accused another priest of libertinism, whom I, and all other persons acquainted with him, know to be pure in word and action. They have calumniated the canon because he hates sectaries; and the priest, because, after having manifested an inclination to their doctrines, he suddenly abandoned them."\*

We might fill a volume with specimens of the scurrilous abuse and wicked calumnies of Luther against the Popes, bishops, monks, and the Catholic priesthood! We consult brevity, and furnish but one or two instances from his Table Talk, which abounds with such specimens of decency. "The monks are lineal descendants of Satan. When you wish to paint the devil, muffle him up in a monk's habit."† Elsewhere he says, "that the devil strangled Emser,"‡ and other Catholic clergymen.

Luther's marriage was not merely a sacrilegious violation of his solemn vows; it was also a master-stroke of policy. Through its influence, he secured the adherence and the persevering aid of a whole army of apostate monks, who eagerly followed his example. Until he took this decisive step, marriage among the clergy and monks was viewed with ridicule, if not with abhorrence by the people. After his marriage, it became, on the contrary, a matter of boast. Priests, monks, and nuns hastened to "the ale-pope of the Black Eagle," to obtain this strange absolution from their vows plighted to heaven: and he received them with open arms, and granted them an *Indulgence*, which never Pope had granted before! Sacrilegious impurity stalked abroad with shameless front throughout Germany.

The married priests became the most untiring friends of the reform, to which they were indebted for their emancipation

\* "In Pseudo-Evangelicos," Epist. lib. xxxi, 47. London, Flesher.

† "Table Talk," p. 109, where he adds: "What a roar of laughter there must be in hell when a monk goes down to it!" Was he thinking of himself?—See Audin, p. 305, and also p. 393. seqq.

‡ Ibid.

from popery, and for their *wives*. We have seen them already in the book shops and the printing presses. Many of them obtained their livelihood, by circulating Lutherau pamphlets through the country.\* Others "took their stand near the church-gates, and often, during the divine offices, exhibited caricatures of the Pope and the bishops."† They carried on a relentless war against the Pope; and it is remarked, that few, if any of these married priests and monks, ever repented, or were softened in their opposition against the Catholic Church! Luther thus, by his marriage, raised up a whole army of zealous and efficient partisans, whose co-operation powerfully aided the progress of reform.‡

Such then were some of the principal means adopted by the reformers and their partisans, for carrying out the work of the Reformation! Were they such as God could have possibly sanctioned? Could a cause indebted to such means for its success be from heaven? On the other hand, considering the corrupt state of society in Germany, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, can we wonder at the great success which attended a movement promoted by such unhallowed means as these? We would be surprised, indeed, on the contrary, if similar success had not attended it, under all the circumstances of the case.

The previous usurpations of Church patronage by the secular princes, contrary to the repeated and energetic protests of the Popes, had done its deadly work, by thrusting unworthy ministers into the sanctuary; and then, with rare inconsistency, the evils and abuses which necessarily ensued, were laid at the doors of the Popes who had done every thing in their power to prevent them! We can not too often repeat it; the question of investitures was the great vital question of the period of Church history preceding the Reformation.

---

\* "Infinitus jam erat numerus qui victum ex Lutheranis libris quæritantes, in speciem bibliopolarum longe lateque per Germaniæ provincias vagabantur."—Cochlæus, p. 58. Apud Audin.

† Ibid.

‡ Cf. Audin, p. 337, seqq.

The distinctive doctrines of the Reformation, throwing off the wholesome restraints of the old religion, flattering pride and pandering to passion; the protection of powerful princes, secured by feeding their cupidity and catering to their basest passions; the furious excitement of the people, fed by maddening appeals from the pulpit and the press, and made to revel in works of spoliation and violence; this excitement, lashed into still greater fury by the constant employment of ridicule, low raillery, misrepresentation, and base calumny of every person and of every thing Catholic; and the marriage of so many apostate priests and monks, binding them irrevocably to the new doctrines:—can we wonder that all these causes combined, and acting too upon an age and country avowedly depraved, should have produced the effect of rapidly diffusing the so called Reformation?

We do not, of course, mean to imply, that all who embraced the Reformation were corrupt, or were led by evil motives: we have no doubt that many were deceived by the specious appearance of piety. This was especially the case with the common people, who often followed the example and obeyed the teaching of their princes and pastors, without taking much trouble to ascertain the right. But we have intended to speak more particularly of the leading actors in the great drama; and to paint the chief parts these men played on the stage.

Much less would we be understood, as indiscriminately and wantonly censuring Protestants of the present day. A broad line of distinction should be drawn between the first teachers and even the first disciples of error, and those who have inherited it from them through a long line of ancestry. The latter might be often free from great censure, where the former would be wholly inexcusable. The strong and close meshes which the prejudices of early education have woven around them; the dense and clouded medium, through which they have been accustomed to view the sun of Catholic truth; the strong influence of parental authority and of family ties;

and many such causes, combine to keep them in error. Besides, history, which should be a witness of truth, has been polluted in its very sources: and the injustice which its voice has done to the cause of truth, has been accumulating for centuries. But can Protestants of the present day, notwithstanding all these disadvantages, hold themselves inexcusable, if they neglect to examine both sides of the question, and this with all the diligence and attention that so grave a subject demands?

To enable them to do this the more easily, was one principal motive that induced us to undertake the review of the partial and unfounded statements of D'Aubigné, and of others belonging to the class of writers of which he is a popular representative. If it be thought, that our picture of the causes and manner of the Reformation, and of the means to which it chiefly owed its success, is too dark, we beg leave to refer to the facts and authorities we have alleged. If there be any truth in history, our painting has not been too highly colored. Had we adduced all the evidence bearing on the subject, the coloring might have been still deeper. We had to examine and refute the flippant assertions, that the reformers were chosen instruments of heaven for a divine work; and that the "reformation was but the reappearance of Christianity."

A "reappearance of Christianity," indeed! It is, from the facts accumulated above, such a "reappearance," as darkness is of light! Strip the Reformation of all that it borrowed from Catholicism, let it appear in its own distinctive character, in all its naked deformity; and it has scarcely one feature remaining in common with early Christianity. Did the Apostles preach doctrines which pandered to the passions of mankind? Did they flatter princes, by offering to them the plunder of their neighbors, and by allowing them to have two wives at once, to quiet their troubled conscience? Did they employ the weapons of ridicule, sarcasm, and calumny against their adversaries? Did they excite their followers to deeds of lawless violence against the established order of

things? Did they break their solemn engagements to heaven? The reformers did all this, and more, as we have shown; and yet they are still to be held up to our admiration, as the new and divinely chosen apostles of a Christianity restored to its original purity!

---

## CHAPTER V.

### THE REFORMATION IN SWITZERLAND—ZURICH.

"The spirit that I have seen  
May be a devil; and the devil hath power  
To assume a pleasing shape."—*Shakespeare*.

The Reformation in Switzerland more radical than that in Germany—Yet like it—Sows dissensions—Zuingle warlike and superstitious—Claims precedency over Luther—Black or white?—Precursory disturbances—Aldermen deciding on faith—How the fortress was entrenched—Riot and conflagration—Enlightenment—Protestant martyrs—Suppression of the Mass—*Solemnity* of the reformed worship—Downright paganism—The Reformation and matrimony—Zuingle's marriage and misgivings—Romance among nuns—How to get a husband—Perversion of Scripture—St. Paul on celibacy—Recapitulation.

BEFORE we proceed to examine the manifold influences of the Reformation, it may be well briefly to glance at the history of its establishment in Switzerland. D'Aubigné devotes two whole books\* to this portion of his history, which, as it concerns his own fatherland, is evidently a favorite topic with him. Our limits will not permit us to follow him through all his tedious and romantic details: we must content ourselves with reviewing some of his leading statements.

After what we have already said concerning the causes and manner of the Reformation in Germany, it will scarcely be

---

\* Book viii, vol. ii, p. 267 to 400: and book xi, vol. iii, p. 255 to 341.

necessary to dwell at any great length on that of Switzerland. The one was but a reappearance of the other—to use one of our author's favorite words. The same great features marked both revolutions, with this only difference: that the Swiss was more radical and more thorough, and therefore more to D'Aubigné's taste. Like the German, however, its progress was everywhere signalized by dissensions, civil commotions, rapine, violence and bloodshed. And like the German, it was also indebted for its permanent establishment to the interposition of the civil authorities. Without this, neither revolution would have had either consistency or permanency. D'Aubigné himself bears unwilling testimony to all these facts, though, as usual, he suppresses many things of vital importance. We will supply some of his omissions, and avail ourselves of his concessions, as we proceed.

The Reformation found the thirteen Swiss cantons united, and in peace among themselves and with all the world. It sowed disunion among them, and plunged them into a fierce and protracted civil war, which threatened rudely to pluck up by the roots the venerable tree of liberty which, centuries before, their Catholic forefathers had planted and watered with their blood! The shrines sacred to the memory of William Tell, Melchtal, and Fürst, the fathers of Swiss independence, were attempted to be rudely desecrated: and the altars at which their forefathers had worshiped in quietness for ages were recklessly overturned. The consequences of this attempt to subvert the national faith by violence were most disastrous. The harmony of the old Swiss republic was destroyed, and the angel of peace departed forever from the hills and the valleys of that romantic country. That this picture is not too highly colored, the following brief summary of facts will prove.

The four cantons of Zurich, Berne, Schaffhausen, and Basle, which first embraced the Reformation, began very soon thereafter to give evidence of their turbulent spirit. They formed a league against the cantons which still resolved to adhere to

the Catholic faith. One article of their alliance forbade any of the confederates to transport provisions to the Catholic cantons. Arms were in consequence taken up on both sides, and a bloody contest ensued. Ulrich Zuingli, the father of the Reformation in Switzerland, marched with the troops of the Protestant party, and fell, bravely fighting with them "the battles of the Lord," on the 11th of Oct., 1531! Did he, in this particular respect, give any evidence of that apostolic spirit, which D'Aubigné ascribes to him? Did ever an apostle of the primitive and genuine stamp die on the field of battle, while seeking the lives of his fellow mortals? He was, moreover, as superstitious, as he was fierce. The historians of his life tell us, that a little before the battle he was stricken with sad foreboding by the appearance of a comet, which he viewed as portending direful disasters to Zurich, and as announcing his own coming death.

Our historian of the Reformation, though chary of the character of Zuingli as an apostle, furnishes us with a little incident which marks the warlike spirit of the Swiss reformer. "In Zurich itself," he says, "a few worthless persons, instigated to mischief by foreign agency, made an attack on Zuingli in the middle of the night, throwing stones at his house, breaking the windows, and calling aloud for the 'red-haired Uli, the vulture of Glaris'—so that Zuingli started from his sleep, and caught up his sword. The action is characteristic of the man."\*

Zuingli was at Zurich, what Luther was at Wittenberg. Each claimed the precedence in the career of the Reformation. Mr. Hallam thus notices their respective claims:

"It has been disputed between the advocates of these leaders to which the priority in the race of reform belongs. Zuingli himself declares, that in 1516, before he had heard of Luther, he began to preach the gospel at Zurich, and to warn the people against relying upon human authority. But that is rather ambiguous, and hardly enough to substantiate his claim. . . . Like Luther, he had the support of the temporal magistrates, the council of

---

\* Vol. iii, p. 275.



Zurich. Upon the whole, they proceeded so nearly with equal steps, and were so connected with each other, that it seems difficult to award either any honor of precedence."\*

We shall have occasion hereafter to refer at some length to the bitter controversy which raged between these two boasted apostles, the germ of which may perhaps be discovered in this early partisan struggle for precedence. They taught contradictory doctrines: one warmly defended, the other as warmly denied the real presence of Christ in the holy Eucharist. Were they both guided by the spirit of God? Can the Holy Spirit inspire contradictory systems of belief? If God was with Luther, He certainly was not with Zuingli; if he was with Zuingli, He certainly could not be with Luther. God is the God of order, and not of confusion; and truth is one and indivisible, not manifold and contradictory.

By the way, what a pity it is that D'Aubigné, while lauding the Swiss reformer to the skies could not settle the important *previous* question which had so sadly puzzled Zuingli:—whether the spirit which appeared to him in his sleep, and suggested the text of Scripture by which he might disprove the real presence, was really black or white? How very gently he touches on this passage in the history of his favorite! He merely gives vent to his surprise, by a note of admiration, that this circumstance should have "given rise to the assertion that the doctrine promulgated by the reformer was delivered to him by the devil!† Did not the reformer's own account of the vision‡—of the nature of which he was certainly the most competent witness—give rise to the suspicion, which afterwards grew into an assertion? And did not his brother reformers openly make the embarrassing charge?

---

\* History of Literature, sup. cit. vol. i, p. 163–4. He cites Gerdes, Histor. Evang. Reform. i, 103.

† D'Aubigné, iii, 272–3.

‡ Ater fuerit an albus, nihil memini, somnium enim narro: "Whether it was black or white, I remember nothing, as I relate a dream."—Why relate the dream at all, unless he attached some importance to it, as conveying some indication or augury of his mission? Ibid.

Zurich was the first city of Switzerland which was favored with the new gospel. Our author treats in great detail\* of the circumstances which attended its first introduction; as well as of the preliminary discussions, commotions, and riots, which were its early harbingers. We will present a few specimens of this truculent spirit.

Leo Juda, one of the precursors of the new gospel, arrived in Zurich "about the end of 1522, to take the duty of pastor of St. Peter's church." Soon after his arrival, being at church, he rudely interrupted an Augustinian monk who was preaching. "'Reverend father Prior,' exclaimed Leo, 'listen to me for an instant; and you, my dear fellow-citizens, keep your seats—I will speak as becomes a Christian:—' and he proceeded to show the unscriptural character of the teaching he had just been listening to. A great disturbance ensued in the church. Instantly several persons angrily attacked the 'little priest' from Einsidlen (Zuingli). Zuingli, repairing to the council, presented himself before them, and requested permission to give an account of his doctrine, in presence of the bishop's deputies;—and the council, desiring to terminate the dissensions, convoked a conference for the 29th of January. The news spread rapidly throughout Switzerland."†

After having given a very lengthy account of the conference, which, as might have been anticipated, terminated in nothing, our author thus manifests his joy at the brightening prospects of the gospel. "Every thing was moving forward at Zurich; men's minds were becoming more enlightened—their hearts more steadfast. The Reformation was gaining strength. Zurich was a fortress, in which the new doctrine had entrenched itself, and from within whose inclosure it was ready to pour itself abroad over the whole confederation."‡

Our historian proceeds to tell us how the "Reformation gained strength," and how "the *new* doctrine entrenched

---

\* D'Aubigné, vol. iii, p. 238, seqq. † Ibid., p. 239. ‡ Ibid., p. 254.

itself in the fortress;" to say nothing of the "enlightenment," of which we will treat hereafter. The "enlightened" council of Zurich decided in favor of the reformed doctrines, and resorted to force in order to suppress the ancient worship. Only think of a town council, composed of fat aldermen and stupid burgomasters, pronouncing definitively on articles of faith! In reading of their high-handed proceedings, we are forcibly reminded of the wonderful achievements, in a somewhat different field, of the far-famed Dutch governors and burgomasters of New Amsterdam, as fully set forth by Irving in his inimitable History of New York. The one is about as grotesque as the other. They of Zurich did not, however, belong to the class of Walter, the Doubter: they were perhaps too well satisfied with their superior wisdom and knowledge to entertain a doubt!

Let us trace some of the further proceedings of this enlightened board of councilmen at Zurich.

"Nor did the council stop here. The relics, which had given occasion to so many superstitions, were honorably interred. And then, *on the further requisition of the three* (reformed) *pastors*, an edict was issued, decreeing that, inasmuch as God alone ought to be honored, the images should be removed from all the churches of the Canton, and their ornaments applied to the relief of the poor. Accordingly twelve counselors—one for each tribe—the three pastors, and the city architect, with some smiths, carpenters, and masons, visited the several churches; and, having first closed the doors, took down the crosses, obliterated the paintings (*the Vandals!*), whitewashed the walls, and carried away the images, to the great joy of the faithful (!) who regarded this proceeding, Bullinger tells us, as a glorious act of homage to the true God."

In some of the country parishes, the ornaments of the churches were committed to the flames, "to the greater honor and glory of God." Soon after this the organs were suppressed, on account of their connection with many "superstitious observances, and a new form of baptism was established from which every thing unscriptural was carefully excluded."\*—

---

\* D'Aubigné, vol. iii, p. 257-8.

What enlightenment, and marvelous taste for music and the fine arts!

"The triumph of the Reformation," our author continues, "threw a joyful radiance over the last hours of the burgo-master Roush and his colleague. They had lived long enough; and they both died within a few days after the restoration of a purer (!) mode of worship."\*—And such a triumph!! Before we proceed to show by what means this purer mode of worship was established at Zurich, we will give, from our historian, an instance of one out of many of the scenes of riot and conflagration enacted by the faithful children of the Reformation. The passage details the proceedings of a party, which went out on a foraging excursion with the pious bailiff Wirth.

"The rabble, meanwhile, finding themselves in the neighborhood of the convent of Ittingen, occupied by a community of Carthusians, who were generally believed (by the faithful) to have encouraged the bailiff Amberg in his tyranny, entered the building and took possession of the refectory. They immediately gave themselves up to excess, and a scene of riot ensued. In vain did Wirth entreat them to quit the place; he was in danger of personal ill-treatment among them. His son Adrian had remained outside of the monastery: John entered it, but shocked by what he beheld within, came out immediately. The inebriated peasants proceeded to pillage the cellars and granaries, to break the furniture to pieces, and *to burn the books.*"†

This is D'Aubigné's statement of the affair: but the deputies of the Cantons found the Wirths guilty, and pronounced sentence of death on them. Our author views them as martyrs, and tells us,‡ in great detail, how cruelly they were "mocked," how they were "faithful unto death," and how intrepidly the "father and son" ascended the scaffold! His whole account is truly affecting. The Reformation is welcome to such martyrs as these!

He exclaims: "Now at length blood had been spilt—innocent blood. Switzerland and the Reformation were baptized with the blood of the martyrs. The great enemy of the gospel

---

D'Aubigné, vol. iii, p. 257–8. † Ibid., p. 264–5. ‡ Ibid., p. 266, seqq.

had effected his purpose; but in effecting it, he had struck a mortal blow at his own power. The death of the Wirths was an appointed means of hastening the triumph of the Reformation.\*—"The reformers of Zurich," he adds, "had abstained from abolishing the Mass when they suppressed the use of images; but the moment for doing so seems now to have arrived."†

He then relates the manner in which the Mass was suppressed, and the "purer worship" introduced in its place.

"On the 11th of August, 1525, the three pastors of Zurich, accompanied by Megander, and Oswald, and Myconius, presented themselves before the great council, and demanded the re-establishment of the Lord's Supper. Their discourse was a weighty one, and was listened to with the deepest attention—every one felt how important was the decision which the council was called upon to pronounce. The Mass—that mysterious rite which for three (fifteen) successive centuries had constituted the animating principle in the worship of the Latin Church (and in all churches)—was now to be abrogated; the corporeal presence of Christ was to be declared an illusion, and of that illusion the minds of the people were to be dispossessed; some courage was needed for such a resolution as this, and there were individuals in the council who shuddered at so audacious a design."‡

The grave board of councilmen did not, however, hesitate long: they seem to have made quick work in this most important matter.

"The great council was convinced by his (Zuingli's) reasoning, and hesitated no longer. (How could they resist his reasoning, based as it was on the teaching of the spirit, *black* or *white*?) The evangelical doctrine had sunk deep into every heart, and moreover, since the separation from Rome had taken place, there was a kind of satisfaction felt in making that separation as complete as possible, and digging a gulf, (the Reformation was a gulf) as it were, between the Reformation and her. The council decreed that the Mass should be abolished, and it was determined that on the following day, which was Maunday Thursday, the Lord's Supper should be celebrated in conformity with the apostolic model."§

"The altars disappeared," he continues; "some plain tables, covered with the sacramental bread and wine, occupied their

---

\* D'Aubigné, iii, p. 270.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid., p. 271.

§ Ibid., p. 272.

places, and a crowd of eager communicants was gathered around them. There was something exceedingly solemn in that assemblage.”\*—No doubt it was much more solemn than had been the Catholic worship! Our author thus describes the solemnity.

“The people then fell on their knees: the bread was carried round on large wooden dishes or platters, and every one broke off a morsel for himself; the wine was distributed in wooden drinking cups; the resemblance to the primitive supper was thought to be the closer.(!) The hearts of those who celebrated this ordinance were affected with alternate emotions of wonder and joy.”†—Truly there was much to excite wonder, if not joy!

In the same strain is the following passage:

“Such was the progress of the Reformation at Zurich. The simple commemoration of our Lord’s death caused a fresh overflow in the church of love to God, and love to the brethren. . . . Zuingli rejoiced at these affecting manifestations of grace, and returned thanks to God, that the Lord’s Supper was again working those miracles of charity, which had long since ceased to be displayed in connection with the Sacrifice of the Mass. ‘Our city,’ said he, ‘continues at peace. There is no fraud, no dissension, no envy, no wrangling among us. Where shall we discover the cause of this agreement except in the Lord’s good pleasure, and the harmlessness and meekness of the doctrine we profess?’”—He, however, spoils this beautiful picture by the following cruel sentence, which immediately follows: “Charity and unity were there—but not uniformity.”‡

Our historian here refers to certain strange doctrines broached by Zuingli in this same year 1525, in his famous “Commentary on true and false religions,” addressed to Francis I., king of France. He labors hard to defend the reformer from the charge of Pelagianism, which his associates in the Reformation did not fail to make. But was it honest in him to conceal the notorious fact, that, in this same Commentary, Zuingli had placed Theseus, Hercules, Numa, Scipio, Cato, and other heathen worthies, in heaven among the elect? This was something worse than Pelagianism; it was downright paganism. Could “charity and unity” reign in the midst of the fiercest wranglings, of the most bitter civil feuds

---

\* D’Aubigné, iii, p. 273.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid., p. 274.

and dissensions, and amidst the bloodshed of a protracted civil war? Yet these were the scenes amid which the Swiss Reformation revealed.

"Such," then, "was the progress of the Reformation at Zurich!" In other places—at Berne and at Basle—its proceedings were marked by similar demonstrations. It was everywhere the same. Everywhere, it invoked the civil power, and everywhere it was established, as at Zurich, by the decisions of boards of town councilmen, and was enforced by violence. D'Aubigné himself alleges facts which prove all this; and we deem it unnecessary to repeat them; especially as we purpose to devote another chapter to the Reformation in Switzerland, in which the facts establishing this view will be more fully set forth.

Ecolampadius was the chief actor on the Reformation-stage at Basle. He was a learned and moderate man, the early friend of Erasmus, and, in some respects, the counterpart of Melancthon. The gospel light seems to have first beamed upon him from the eye of a beautiful young lady, whom, in violation of his solemn vows plighted to heaven, he espoused;—"probably," as Erasmus wittily remarked, "to mortify himself!" In the race of matrimony, at least, he could claim the precedence over many of his brother reformers. Yet the latter did not long remain behind. Matrimony was, in almost all cases, the dénouement of the drama which signalized the zeal for reformation. Zuingli himself espoused a rich widow. A widow also caught Calvin, a little later. Martin Bucer, another reformer, who figured chiefly in Switzerland, far outstripped any of his fellows in the hymeneal career. He became the husband of no less than three ladies in succession: and one of them had been already married three times—all too, by a singular run of good luck, in the reformation line!\*

---

\* For a full and humorous account of this whole matter, see "Travels of an Irish gentleman," ch. xlv; where the great Irish poet enters into the subject at length; giving his authorities as he proceeds, and playing off his caustic wit on the hymeneal propensities of the reformers.

It is really curious to observe, how D'Aubigné treats this remarkable subject. Speaking of the Swiss reformers, he says :

"Several among them at this period (1522) returned to the 'apostolic' usage\* (!) Xyloclect was already a husband. Zuingle also married about this time. Among the women of Zurich, none was more respected than Anna Reinhardt, widow of Meyer von Knonau, mother of Gerold. From Zuingle's coming among them, she had been constant in her attendance on his ministry ; she lived near him, and he had remarked her piety, modesty, and maternal tenderness. Young Gerold, who had become almost like a son to him, contributed further to bring about an intimacy with his mother. The trials that had already befallen this Christian woman—whose fate it was to be one day more severely tried than any woman whose history is on record—had formed her to a seriousness which gave prominency to her Christian virtues. She was then about thirty-five, and her whole fortune consisted of four hundred florins.† It was on her that Zuingle (kind, sympathetic soul !) fixed his eyes for a companion for life."‡

Still he seems to have entertained serious misgivings at thus breaking his solemn vows :

"He did not make his marriage public. This was beyond doubt a blameable weakness in one who was in other respects so resolute (reckless ?). The light he and his friends possessed on the subject of celibacy was by no means general. The weak might have been stumbled."§

This last is a new phrase, introduced, we suppose, to unfold a new idea—that the people retained conscience longer than the boasted reformers, who misled them from the old paths.

On this same subject, D'Aubigné treats us to some fine touches of romance, concerning nuns who embraced the Reformation, and then immediately, as a seemingly necessary sequel, got married ! We will give a few instances :

"At Königsfeld upon the river Aar, near the castle of Hapsburg, stood a monastery adorned with all the magnificence of the middle ages, and in which reposed the ashes of many of that illustrious house which had so often given an emperor to Germany. To this place the noble families of

\* How *very* absurd ! Was St. Paul married ? Were any of the Apostles ever married, except St. Peter, of whose wife the Scripture says nothing after he became an Apostle ? She was probably dead.

† A very large sum at that time.

‡ D'Aubigné, vol. ii, p. 383.

§ Ibid., p. 384.



Switzerland and of Suabia used to send their daughters to take the veil . . . . The liberty enjoyed in this convent . . . . had favored the introduction not only of the Bible (they had it already, and were even obliged to read portions of it daily by their rule), but the writings of Luther and Zuingli; and soon a new spring of life and joy changed the aspect of its interior!"\*

A new spring of life and of joy was certainly thus opened to the nuns. They soon became tired of retirement and of prayer: they sighed for the flesh-pots of Egypt to which they had bidden adieu—for the "life and joy" of the world. Margaret Watteville, one of them, wrote a letter to Zuingli, full of piety and of affection; and declared that she expressed not "her own feelings only, but those of all the convent of Königsfeld who loved the gospel."†

D'Aubigné accordingly tells us, that a "convent into which the light of the gospel had penetrated with such power, could not long continue to adhere to monastic observances. Margaret Watteville and her sisters, persuaded that they should better serve God in their families than in the cloister, solicited permission to leave it."‡ The council of Berne heard their prayer: the convent "gates were opened; and a short time afterwards, Catharine Bonnsteten (one of the nuns) married William Von Diesbach."§ The nun Margaret Watteville was equally fortunate: she "was about the same time united to Lucius Tschärner of Coira."|| Such was almost invariably the dénouement of the reformation plot.

Our historian, in fact, views the sacrilegious marriages of the priests and nuns—against their solemn vows freely plighted to God at his holy altar—as the most conclusive proof of the progress of the Reformation! Mark this curious passage:

"But it was in vain to attempt to smother the Reformation at Berne. It made progress on all sides. The nuns of the convent D'Ile had not forgotten Haller's visit. (This was a wretched apostate, who had held improper discourse in the convent, which drew upon him a sentence of perpetual ban-

\* D'Aubigné, vol. iii, p. 280, 281.

† This letter is given in full, Ibid., vol. iii, p. 281, 282.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid

|| Ibid., p. 285.

ishment from the lesser council of Berne; which sentence was however mitigated by the grand council, which was content with merely rebuking him and his associate reformers, and ordering them to confine themselves in future to their own business and let the convents alone.)\* Clara May, (one of the nuns) and many of her friends, pressed in their consciences (!) what to do, wrote to the learned Henry Bullinger. In answer, he said: 'St. Paul enjoins young women not to take on them vows, but to marry, instead of living in idleness under a false show of piety. (1 Tim. v: 13, 14). Follow Jesus in humility, charity, patience, purity, and kindness.' Clara, looking to heaven for guidance, resolved to act on the advice, and renounce a manner of life at variance with the word of God—of man's invention—and beset with snares. Her grandfather Bartholomew, who had served for fifty years in the field and council hall, heard with joy of the resolution she had formed. Clara quitted the convent,†—and married the provost, Nicholas Watteville.‡

What an evidence of piety, "looking to heaven for guidance," is it not—to get married! And what a perversion of Scripture was not that by Henry Bullinger, to induce those to marry who had taken solemn vows of devoting themselves wholly to God in a life of chastity! As this is a pretty good specimen of the manner in which the reformers "wrested the Scriptures to their own perdition,"§ we will give entire the quotation of St. Paul to Timothy, referred to by the "learned Henry Bullinger," including the two previous verses, which he found it convenient not to quote—probably because they would have convicted him of a most glaring perversion of God's holy word.

1 Timothy, chap. v, verse 11. "But the younger widows shun: for when they have grown wanton in Christ, they will *marry*; (this advice the reformers took special care not to follow).

Verse 12. "*Having damnation, because they have made void their first faith, (by violating their vows to God).*

V. 13. "And withal, being idle, they learn to go about from house to house (as the escaped nuns did at the time of the Reformation): not only idle, but talkers also, and inquisitive, speaking things which they ought not.

V. 14. "I will, therefore, that the younger (who had not taken vows)

\* Such at least is the statement of D'Aubigné—iii, p. 279.

† Ibid., p. 284.

‡ Ibid., p. 285.

§ 2 Peter, iii: 16.

should marry, bear children, be mistresses of families, give no occasion to the adversary to speak evil."

This passage of St. Paul speaks for itself, and needs no commentary. While the reformers were quoting St. Paul, with a view to induce the nuns to escape from their convents and to get married, why did they not also refer to the following texts:

"But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: *it is good for them so to continue, even as I.*"\*

"Art thou bound to a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? *Seek not a wife.*"†

"But I would have you to be without solicitude. He that is without a wife, is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. But he that is with a wife, is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife: and he is divided."‡

And why especially did they conceal the following texts, which had special reference to the nun who, "having grown wanton in Christ, *would* marry, having damnation, because they had made void their first faith?"

"And the unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit. But she that is married, thinketh on the things of the world, how she may please her husband. Therefore, both he who giveth his virgin in marriage doeth well; and he that giveth her not, doeth better."§

Alas! the carnal minded reformers understood little of this sublime perfection! They could not appreciate it. They were satisfied with doing well; nor did they even come up to this standard, any further at least, than to get married! Their case is sufficiently explained by St. Paul, in the same epistle from which the above texts are extracted. "But the sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the spirit of God: for it is foolishness to him, and he can not understand: because it is spiritually examined."||

We will now proceed to show more fully, that the subsequent developments of the Swiss Reformation corresponded

---

\* 1 Corinth. vii: 8.      † Ibid., verse 27.      ‡ Ibid., verses 32, 33.

§ Ibid., verses 34, 38.

|| 1 Corinth. ii: 14.

with its first beginnings at Zurich; and that, everywhere, throughout the Swiss confederation, it pandered to the worst passions, was established by intrigue, civil commotions and violence; and that it openly infringed all previous ideas of popular rights and liberty. We shall hereafter devote a separate chapter to the Calvinistic branch of the Reformation, established at Geneva.

---

## CHAPTER VI.

### REFORMATION IN SWITZERLAND—BERNE.

History by Louis De Haller—A standard authority—Berne the centre of operations—De Haller's point of view—His character as an historian—His authorities—Wavering of Berne—Tortuous policy—How she embraced the reform—The *bear* and the *pears*—Treacherous perjury of Berne—Zuinglian council—Its decrees—Religious liberty crushed—Riot and sacrilege—Proceedings of Bernese commissioners—Downright tyranny—The minister Farel—His fiery zeal—An appalling picture—A parallel—Priests hunted down—Character of the ministers—Avowal of Capito—The glorious privilege of private judgment—How consistent!—Persecution of brother Protestants—Drowning the Anabaptists—Reformation in Geneva—Rapid summary of horrors—The Bernese army of invasion—The sword and the Bible—Forbearance of Catholics—Affecting incident at Soleure—The war of Cappell—Points of resemblance—An armed apostle—A prophet quailing before danger—Battle of Cappell—Death of Zuingle—Triumph of Catholic cantons—Treaty of peace.

FOR most of the facts contained in this chapter, we are indebted to De Haller, whose late work on the history of the Swiss Reformation is a standard authority. So far as we know, his facts have never been disputed, nor his arguments answered.\*

---

\* His work is entitled : *Histoire de la revolution religieuse, ou de la reforme Protestante dans la Suisse Occidentale.* Par Charles Louis De Haller, ancien membre du conseil souverain, et du conseil secret de Berne, chev-

As we have already seen, Zurich was the first city in Switzerland which embraced the Reformation; or, as De Haller expresses it, she was "the mother and the root of all religious and political Protestantism in Switzerland."\* She was nearly eight years in advance of Berne in the race of reform; and it was through her influence mainly that the latter at length consented to accept the new gospel. But once Berne had embraced it, she far outstripped her preceptor in religious zeal or fanaticism; and she took the lead in all the subsequent religioso-political affairs of the country. Her central position, her rich and extensive territory, her untiring industry, and her adroit and unscrupulous diplomacy, gave her the ascendancy over the other Protestant cantons, and made her the leader in every great enterprise. It was through her intrigues that Geneva was induced to receive the new doctrines; it was by her triumphant physical power that the Reformation was thrust down the throats of the good Catholic people of Vaud. Bernese preachers, escorted by Bernese bailiffs and spies, traversed all the north-western cantons, scattering dissension wherever they went, and establishing the new gospel, either by intrigue or by force, wherever they could. Cautiously and cunningly, but with an industry that never tired, and a resolution that never faltered, Berne pursued her Machiavelian policy; until, by one means or another, about half of the Swiss confederation was torn from Catholic unity, and bound, at the same time, by strong political ties to herself. Thus she became the great leader of the Protestant, as Lucerne has ever been that of the Catholic cantons of Switzerland.

It is from this elevated point of view, that De Haller looks

---

alier de l'ordre royal de la legion d'honneur, et de celui de Charles III. d'Espagne, etc. History of the religious revolution, or of the Protestant Reformation, in Western Switzerland. By Charles Louis De Haller, former member of the supreme and of the secret councils of Berne, Knight of the royal order of the legion of honor, and of that of Charles III. of Spain, etc. 4th edition. Paris, 1839. 1 vol. 12mo, pp. 436. \* De Haller, p. 434

down upon the history of the Swiss Reformation. Himself a Bernese, and, until he became a Catholic,\* a Bernese counselor as high in power and influence as he was in wisdom and talents, he was eminently qualified to write a history of the religious revolution in Switzerland. Candid and moderate by nature, of an enlarged mind and comprehensive genius, his scrupulous veracity has not been denied even by his strongest opponents; while he certainly had every opportunity to become thoroughly acquainted with the events he relates. He assures us in his preface, that his history "can not be taxed with exaggeration, for it has been faithfully derived from Historical Fragments of the city of Berne, composed by a Bernese ecclesiastic (Protestant); from the History of the Swiss, by Mallett, a Genevan Protestant; from that of Baron d'Alt, a Catholic, it is true, but excessively reserved upon all that might displease the Bernese; and above all, in fine, from the History of the Reformation in Switzerland, by Ruchat, a zealous Protestant minister and professor of belles-lettres at the academy of Lausanne, to whom all the archives were opened for the composition of his work."†

This last named writer, whom he quotes continually, was a most violent partisan of the Swiss Reformation; and yet even he was compelled to relate a large portion of the truth, mixed up, as usual, with much adroit and canting misrepresentation. Thus, he asserts, among other things, "that the Catholic religion is idolatrous and superstitious, and that it can not be sustained but by ignorance, by interest, by violence, and by fraud."‡ De Haller meets the injurious charge, not by asserting, but by *proving*, from undeniable evidence, that the Swiss Reformation was established precisely by these identical means, and that it could not, in fact, have been established otherwise. He says:

\* For having become a Catholic, he was expelled from the council, probably in order to prove Protestant love of liberty!

† De Haller, p. ix.

‡ Quoted by De Haller, Preface, p. x.

"Protestants of good faith—and there are many such among our separated brethren—will judge for themselves, from a simple exposition of facts, whether it was not rather their own religion which was introduced by ignorance, interest, violence, and fraud: by *ignorance*, for it was everywhere the ignorant multitude that decided, without knowledge of the cause, upon questions of faith and discipline, and this was carried so far that even children of fourteen years were called to these popular assemblies; by *interest*, for the robbery of churches, of temples, and of monasteries, was the first act of the Reformation; by *violence*, for it was with armed force that altars were overturned, images broken, convents pillaged, and it became necessary to employ fire and sword, confiscation and exile, in order to make the new religion prevail over the ancient belief; by *lying* and by *fraud*, for Luther and Zuingli formally recommended both to their followers as means of success, and their counsel has been followed with fidelity and perseverance even unto our own day. We will now pass on to the facts and the proof."\*

We defy any one to read attentively De Haller's work, without admitting that he has triumphantly proved all this, and even more, by facts and evidence derived mainly from Protestant sources. Our limits will not, of course, allow us to go into all the details of the evidence; yet we hope to be able to furnish enough to convince any impartial mind that De Haller's position is entirely sound and tenable. But first we must glance rapidly at the manner in which the Reformation was first introduced into Berne; which, as we have already intimated, subsequently exercised so strong an influence, both religious and political, on other parts of Switzerland.

It was slowly and cautiously that Berne embraced the new doctrines. Long did she resist the intrigues of the Zurichers, and the wily arts of their new apostle, Ulrich Zuingli. This man understood well the character of the Bernese; their wary distrust of any thing new, their deeply seated self-

---

\* Pref. x, and xi. He gives us in a note, besides some curious facts about Zuingli, the following passage from a letter of Luther to Melancthon, dated August 30, 1530: "When we will have nothing more to fear, and when we shall be left in repose, we will then *repair all our present lies, our frauds, and our acts of violence.*"

interest, and their dogged obstinacy in maintaining whatever they finally settled down upon. He well knew all this, and he acted accordingly. Writing to Berchtold Haller, the first herald of the new gospel at Berne, he advised moderation and caution; "for," says he, "the minds of the Bernese are not yet ripe for the new gospel."\* In a letter subsequently addressed to Francis Kolb, he uses this quaint language, alluding to the cantonal type of Berne—the *bear*:

"My dear Francis! proceed slowly, and not too rudely, in the business; do not throw to the *bear* at first but one sour pear along with a great many sweet ones, afterwards two, then three; and if he begin to swallow them, throw him always more and more, sour and sweet, pellmell. Finally, empty the sack altogether; soft, hard, sweet, sour, and crude; he will devour them all, and will not suffer any one to take them away from him, nor to drive him away."†

Zuingli understood his men, and his arts succeeded even beyond his most sanguine expectations. Berne vacillated for several years between truth and error; her policy was wavering and tortuous; but at length she threw her whole influence into the scale of the Reformation; and once she had taken her position, she maintained it with her characteristic obstinacy.

Though her counsels were often uncertain, yet, in the main, she had continued faithful to the old religion up to the year 1527. On the 26th of January, 1524, we find her delegates uniting with those of the twelve cantons at Lucerne in a strong decree, *unanimously* passed, for the maintenance of Catholicity.‡ Shortly afterwards, she listened with respect to the voice of the three Catholic bishops of Constance, Bâle, and Lausanne, who strongly urged the cantons to remain steadfast in their faith, and who promised "that if, in lapse of time, some abuses had glided into the ecclesiastical state, they would examine the matter with unremitting diligence, and abolish the abuses with all their power."§

In 1525–6, the terrible revolt of the peasants took place in

---

\* Quoted by De Haller, p. 18.

† Ibid., p. 18, note.

‡ Ibid., p. 22.

§ Ibid., p. 23.



Germany, and penetrated even into Switzerland. It had certainly grown out of the revolutionary principles broached by the reformers, and it was headed by Protestant preachers, as Ruchat, himself a preacher, admits in the following passage: "Having at their head *the preachers of the reform*, they pillaged, ravaged, massacred, and burnt every thing that fell into their hands."\* Sartorius, another Protestant historian of Germany, admits the same.† All social order was threatened with annihilation by these wild fanatics, whose number was legion; and Berne, appalled by the danger, made a temporary truce with her tergiversation, recoiled from the precipice, on the brink of which she had been standing, and fell back on her old vantage ground of conservative Catholicity. On the 21st of May, 1526, her grand council published an edict for the preservation of the old religion, and its members bound themselves, *by a solemn oath, to maintain it inviolate.*‡

Yet, in the following year, Berne revoked this decree, violated this solemnly plighted oath, joined the Reformation, and lent her whole influence to its propagation throughout Switzerland! Her wavering ceased all of a sudden, and her policy, hitherto tortuous and always unprincipled, now became firmly settled. Not only she declared for the Reformation, but she spared no labor, no intrigue, no money,—nothing, to make it triumph everywhere. It was mainly through her subsequent efforts that the Reformation was fastened on a large portion of the Swiss republic. By what means this was accomplished, we have already intimated; and now we will furnish some of the principal specifications and evidence bearing on the subject. The facts we are going to allege clearly prove this great leading feature of the Swiss Reformation:—that it was only by intrigue, chicanery, persecution, and open violence, that it was finally established at the city

---

\* Quoted by De Haller, p. 23.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid., ch. iv, p. 27 seqq.

of Berne and throughout the canton, as well as in all the other cantons where Bernese influence could make itself felt.

In 1528, a conference, or rather a species of Zuinglian council was held at Berne, for the purpose of deciding on the articles of faith to be adopted in the proposed reformation. Zuingle was the master spirit of the assembly, at which very few Catholics assisted. Ten articles, or *theses*, were there adopted by the ministers; but, though drawn up with studied ambiguity and vagueness, they were still signed only by a minority of the Bernese clergy, the majority still clinging to the old faith. Yet the Bernese grand council of state not only adopted and confirmed these articles, but enjoined their adoption on all the people of the canton. Pastors and curates were forbidden to teach any thing opposed to them; the Mass was abolished, altars were to be demolished, images to be burnt, and the four bishops of Switzerland were declared deprived of all jurisdiction! Moreover, priests were permitted to marry, and religious persons of both sexes to leave their convents; the ministers were ordered to preach four times each week under penalty of suspension; and finally the council reserved to itself the right "to change this new religion if any one would prove to them any thing better by the Scriptures."\*

Such was the tenor of the famous Bernese decree, by which the new gospel was first *established by law*. Nor did it remain a dead letter. Violence, sacrilege, and robbery rioted throughout the canton. The churches of the Catholics were forcibly seized on, the altars were overturned, the beautiful decorations of paintings and statuary were defaced or broken to pieces, people were forbidden any longer to worship at the altars and shrines of their fathers; and very soon the whole canton presented the appearance of a country through which an army of Vandals and Huns had but lately marched. It is a certain and undoubted *fact*, that the Reformation was *forced*

---

\* Quoted by De Haller, pp. 52, 53.

upon the Bernese people, against the positive will of the majority! But the minority were active, untiring, revolutionary, and they had the civil authorities to back them; the majority were often indifferent and negligent; their natural protectors, the more zealous among the clergy, had been compelled to fly; and thus left alone, a flock without shepherds, the people were at length wearied out and harassed into conformity.

To enforce the new religious law, commissioners were sent from Berne into all the communes of the canton, with instructions to address the people, and to use every effort to induce them to embrace the new gospel. After their harangues, the matter was to be immediately put to the popular vote, boys of fourteen years being entitled to the privilege of suffrage! If the majority went for the new gospel, even if this majority consisted but of one voice, the minority were compelled to abandon the old religion, and the Mass was declared publicly abolished throughout the commune! If, on the contrary, the majority, as was often the case, in spite of every entreaty and threat, went for the old religion, the Protestant minority still remained free to practice publicly their worship. Moreover, in this latter case, the vote of the commune was again taken by parishes, in order that those in which the majority were Protestants might be protected by the civil authority. Even if a commune voted unanimously in favor of Catholicity, the possibility of practicing their religion was taken away from the Catholics by the banishment of their priests, and the stationing amongst them of Protestant preachers; or if their Bernese excellencies graciously allowed them to retain their pastors, it was only for a time and until further orders!\*

We ask whether all this was not downright tyranny of the worst kind; and whether our assertion made above was at all exaggerated? But this is not yet all, nor even half. There were in Switzerland certain cities and districts under the joint government and control of Berne, Friburg and other Catholic

---

\* Quoted by De Haller, pp. 53, 54.

cantons. To these Berne sent out her emissaries, both religious and political. If they could be gained over to the new religion, they would probably throw off the yoke of their Catholic joint sovereigns, and fall solely under the government of Berne, to say nothing of the spiritual good which would accrue to their souls from the new gospel. Hence no money nor intrigue was to be spared to proselytize them.

The fiery minister, Farel, armed with Bernese passports, and accompanied or sustained by Bernese deputies and bailiffs, ran over these common cities and districts, with the impetuous fury of one possessed by an evil spirit. He stirred up seditions whithersoever he went, either against the old religion or against himself; and his progress was everywhere marked by conflagrations and ruins. In the bishopric of Bâle, in several towns and communes belonging to the present canton of Vaud, in Soleure, and elsewhere, this furious fanatic and political firebrand agitated society to its very depths, and lashed popular passions into a fury which was entirely uncontrollable. Wherever the populace could be won over to his party, or even overawed into silence, he caused the Mass to be abolished, churches to be stripped, pillaged, and sacrilegiously desecrated, and altars to be overturned! And the Bernese authorities not only calmly looked on, but they even sanctioned all these ferocious deeds, and cast the shield of their protection around the person of Farel.\*

Insurrections and violence everywhere marked the progress of the Reformation. Look, for instance, at the following graphic picture of Switzerland during the epoch in question, drawn by De Haller:

"During the years 1529, 1530, and 1531, Switzerland found herself in a frightful condition, and altogether similar to that of which we are now witnesses, three centuries later. Nothing was seen everywhere but hatred, broils, and acts of violence; everywhere reigned discord and division; discord between the cantons, discord in the bosom of the governments, discord between sovereigns and subjects, in fine, discord and division even in every

---

\* See De Haller, p. 71 seqq., for detailed proof of all this.

parish and in every family. The defection of Berne, at which the Zurichers had labored for six years, had unchained the audacity of all the meddlers and bad men in Switzerland. On all sides new revolutions broke out;—at Bâle, at St. Gall, at Bienne, at Thurgovia, at Frauenfeld, at Mellingen, at Bremgarten, even at Gaster and in the Toggenburg, at Herissau, at Wettlingen, and finally at Schaffhausen. Everywhere they were brought about by a band of poltroons or at least of ignorant burghesses, both turbulent and factious, against the will of the intimidated magistrates, and of the more numerous and peaceable portion of the inhabitants who looked upon these innovations with horror, but whose indignation was arrested and whose zeal was paralyzed, as happens during our own days, by a pretended necessity of avoiding the effusion of blood, and preventing the horrors of a civil war. Thus one party declared an implacable war against their fellow-citizens and every thing that is sacred, while the other was condemned to suffer without resistance all manner of injuries, all manner of hostilities; and this state of triumphant iniquity and of miserable servitude was qualified by the fine name of peace. Everywhere, except at Schaffhausen, a city which was always distinguished for its tranquillity and the peaceful character of its inhabitants, seditious armed mobs rushed of their own accord to the churches, broke down the altars, burnt the images, destroyed the most magnificent monuments of art, pillaged the sacred vases as well as other objects of value, and put up for public sale at auction the sacred vestments: by such vandalism and by such sacrileges was the religious revolution of the sixteenth century signalized.”\*

Just imagine that the United States were densely populated and filled with cities, and that the Catholic religion were that of the people; but that a religious revolution had been effected in one of our great cities,—say Philadelphia,—by violence, sustained by the civil authorities; that there all our churches had been pillaged and desecrated, a part of them burned down and the other part seized on for the Protestant worship; that the frenzy spread, until similar scenes were enacted in half the cities and towns of our republic; imagine, in a word, the Philadelphia riots, aggravated a hundred fold, extending through half the country, and keeping the people in a state of anarchy and civil war for more than twenty years; imagine our hitherto peaceful republic broken up by discord, and

---

\* De Haller, pp. 62-64.

bathed in the blood of its citizens, until at last the fierce rioters sit down in triumph amidst the ruins they had everywhere strewn around them; and you will then have some faint conception of the rise, progress, and triumph of the Protestant Reformation in a large portion of Switzerland! Recent events, both in this country and in Switzerland, have proved that Protestantism has not yet lost all of its original fierceness, and that its turbulent spirit has not been yet entirely subdued by the onward march of refinement and civilization. As might have been anticipated, the Bernese met with frequent resistance in their efforts to destroy the old religion, and to force the new one on the people. Popular insurrections broke out at Aigle, and in the bailiwicks of Lentzburg, Frutigen, Interlaken, and Haut-Siebenthal, as well as in other places. How was this resistance met? It was crushed by main force, probably with a view to demonstrate to all the world how sincerely the Bernese were attached to the great fundamental principles of the Reformation,—that each one should read the Bible and judge for himself! As De Haller says:

“An edict of persecution was issued, which directed that images should be everywhere broken and altars demolished, as well in the churches as in private houses; *that priests who yet said Mass should be everywhere hunted down*, seized on whenever they could be caught, and put in prison: that every one who spoke badly of the Bernese authorities should be treated in like manner; for, says Ruchat, the Catholics of the canton and vicinity declaimed horribly against them. In case of relapse, the priests were outlawed and delivered up to public vengeance: in fine, the same edict decreed punishment against all who should sustain these refractory priests (that is, all who remained faithful to the ancient religion), or who afforded them an asylum. A third edict of the 22d December, forbade any one to go into the neighboring cantons to hear Mass, under penalty of deprivation for those who held office, and of arbitrary punishment for private individuals.”\*

Was ever tyranny and persecution carried further than this? And yet this is but one chapter in the history of the Swiss Reformation. The same ferocious intolerance was

---

\* De Haller, p. 57-58.

witnessed wherever the Reformation made its appearance, in the once peaceful and happy land of William Tell. Did our limits permit, we might prove this by facts, as undeniable as they are appalling. Those Catholic priests who were not willing to betray their religion, or to sell their conscience for a mess of pottage, were everywhere thrown into prison or banished the country. They were succeeded by preachers, many of them fugitives from France and Germany, and most of them men of little learning and less piety, remarkable only for a certain boldness and rude popular eloquence or declamation. Men of this stamp, who had suddenly, and often without vocation or ordination, intruded themselves into the holy ministry, could not hope to win or secure the confidence of the people. Accordingly, we find the following candid avowal on the subject, in a confidential letter of the minister Capito to Farel, written as late as 1537. He says:

"The authority of the ministers is entirely abolished; all is lost, all goes to ruin. The people say to us boldly: you wish to make yourselves the tyrants of the Church, you wish to establish a new papacy. God makes me know what it is to be a pastor, *and the wrong we have done the Church by the precipitate and inconsiderate vehemence which has caused us to reject the Pope.* For the people, accustomed to unbounded freedom, and as it were nourished by it, have spurned the rein altogether; they cry out to us: we know enough of the gospel, what need have we of your help to find Jesus Christ? Go and preach to those who wish to hear you."\*

The intolerance of the Protestant party was surpassed only by its utter inconsistency. The glorious privileges of private judgment, of liberty of conscience and of the press, were forever on their lips; and yet they recklessly trampled them all under their feet! Each one was to interpret the Bible for himself, and yet he who dared interpret it differently from their excellencies, the counsellors of Berne, was punished as an enemy of the government! The counter principle of a union of church and state, was even openly avowed and con-

---

\* *Epistola ad Farel*. inter epist. Calvini, p. 5; quoted by De Haller, p. 99, note.

stantly acted on. The council of ministers, held at Berne in 1532, subscribed a confession of faith drawn up by Capito, in which the following remarkable passages are found:

"The ministers acknowledge *that it is not possible for them to produce any fruit in their church, unless the civil magistrate lend his assistance to advance the good work*. . . . Every Christian magistrate ought in the exercise of his power, to be the lieutenant and minister of God, and to maintain among his subjects the evangelical doctrine and life, so far at least as it is exercised outwardly and is practised in external things.\* . . . . The magistrates should then take great care to preserve sound doctrine; to prevent error and seduction, to punish blasphemy and all outward sins affecting religion and conduct, to protect the truth and good morals."†

This forcibly reminds us of the doctrines of the *nursing fathers*, so much spoken of, even in our American Presbyterian Confession of Faith. As some additional evidence of the love which the Swiss reformers bore to the liberty of the press and to that of conscience, read the two following extracts from our author:

"The Bernese, who had talked so much about the liberty of conscience and that of the press while it was a question of establishing the reform, then sent deputies to Bâle to complain of the libels which were there printed against the deputies of Berne, and they demanded that silence should be imposed on the preachers unfavorable to the reform. Thus it is that the Protestants did not wish to allow liberty to any one, so soon as they became the masters. The Bernese deputation was, however, dismissed from Bâle without having attained its object."‡

"In virtue of the freedom of conscience, the triumphant innovators removed all the Catholic counselors, and forbade any one to preach against what they called the reform. At Bâle, in particular, the nobility were driven away, and the Catholic clergy, the chapter, and even the professors of the university, abandoned forever a city of which they were the ornament and the glory, and which owed to them its lustre and its very existence."§

Those who are guilty of the unpardonable crime of adhering tenaciously and fondly to the time-honored religion of their fathers, were not the only ones who felt the smart of Protestant intolerance in Switzerland. Brother Protestants were

---

\* De Haller, p. 97. He quotes Ruchat.

† Ibid. p. 100.

‡ Ibid., pp. 58-59.

§ Ibid., p. 64.



also persecuted, if they had the misfortune to believe either more or less than their more enlightened brethren, who happened to be orthodox *for the time being*. The Anabaptists, in particular, were hunted down with a ferocity which is almost inconceivable. The favorite mode of punishing them, especially at Berne, was by *drowning*! This manner of death was deemed the most appropriate, because it was only baptizing them in their own way!\* The rivers and lakes, which abound in Switzerland, often received the dead bodies of these poor deluded men. Sometimes, however, this mode of punishment was dispensed with in favor of others less revolting to humanity. Says De Haller:

“Their Excellencies of Berne, not being able to convince the Anabaptists, found it much more simple to banish them, or to throw them into the water and drown them. These punishments having, however, rather increased their number, the council of Berne, being embarrassed, resorted to measures less severe, and *acting under the advice of the ministers*, published on the 2d of March, 1533, an edict announcing that the Anabaptists should be left in peace, if they would keep their belief to themselves, and maintain silence; but that if they continued to preach and to keep up a separate sect, they should not be any longer condemned to death, *but only to perpetual imprisonment on BREAD AND WATER*! This was certainly a singular favor. Catholics, who are accused of so much intolerance, had never molested the Zuinglians who had kept their faith to themselves, and even when these openly preached their doctrines from the pulpit, they were not condemned either to death or to perpetual imprisonment on bread and water.†

As we have already said, the progress of the Swiss Reformation was everywhere marked by intrigues, popular commotions, mob violence, and sacrilege. So it was at Geneva, into which the Reformation was introduced in the year 1535, chiefly again through the intrigues of Berne. It was not Calvin who established the Reformation at Geneva; he only reaped the harvest which had been sown by others. The fiery Farel, shielded with the panoply of Bernese protection and acting in concert with Bernese envoys, had already succeeded in there subverting, to a great extent, the ancient

---

\* See De Haller, pp. 39, 69, et alibi passim.

† Ibid, pp. 153–154.

faith. And by what means? We have not room for full details, for which we must refer our readers to a very interesting chapter in De Haller's history.\* Suffice it to say, that the whole city was thrown into commotion; that the Catholic churches were violently seized upon, after having been first sacrilegiously defaced and desecrated in the hallowed name of religion; that the Catholic clergy were hunted down and forced to fly the city; that nearly half of the population was compelled to emigrate, in order to secure to themselves peace and freedom of conscience; that even after they had emigrated, their property was confiscated and they were disfranchised, in punishment of their having *dared* to leave the city; that the harmless nuns of St. Clare, after having been long harassed and insulted by the mob, were also compelled to leave their home and seek shelter elsewhere; that the Catholic church property was seized upon by the reformed party; that, after having filled the whole city, and especially the churches, with the "abomination of desolation," Farel and his *pious* associates were able to assemble congregations and to preach, in only *two* out of the many Genevan churches of which they had obtained possession; that even in these they often preached to empty benches, so great was the horror which all these multiplied sacrileges inspired in the popular mind; and that, finally, the Reformation was established in Geneva by the great council, and afterwards by the swords and bayonets of the Bernese army, which entered the city in 1536!

Such were the first fruits of the Reformation in Geneva. In the canton of Vaud, which was invaded and subdued by the Bernese army in the same year, the proceedings were, if possible, still more violent, and the policy still more truculent. Wheresoever the Bernese army marched, there the Reformation was established by force of arms. The Bernese bore the sword in one hand and the Bible in the other; and they

---

\* De Haller, chap. xvi.

established the new gospel in Vaud pretty much after the Mohammedan fashion of proselytism!

De Haller proves all this by an array of evidence, which can neither be gainsaid nor resisted.\* He proves it from the testimony of Ruchat, Mallet, Spon, and other Protestant historians. He furnishes *facts*, with names, dates, and specifications; *facts* as clear as the noonday sun; *facts* which we challenge any one to deny or contravene. And we ask, whether it be at all likely that a Reformation effected by such means, was, or could possibly have been, the work of God? Could God have chosen such instruments and such means to effect His work? Could He smile on commotions, on riots, on robbery, on impurity, on broken vows, on sacrilege? Gracious heavens! How much do those delude themselves, who still cling to the belief that the Reformation was the work of God! Well may we address to them, and to all who may chance to read these pages, the emphatic words of St. Augustine prefixed to the title-page of De Haller's work: "Let those hear who have not fallen, lest they fall; let those hear who have fallen, that they may rise!"†

If it be alleged, that the Catholics too sometimes resorted to violence and appealed to the sword; we answer that they did so, almost without an exception, only in necessary self-defense. Their forbearance, amidst all the terrible outrages which we have briefly enumerated, was indeed wonderful. If they sometimes repelled force by force; if they flew to arms more than once in their own defense, it was surely competent for them to do so. Their lives were threatened, their property was invaded, their altars were desecrated; and surely, when considerations such as these urged them to buckle on their good swords, they were not only excusable, but they would have been arrant cowards had they failed to do so. And no one

---

\* See De Haller, p. 271 seqq. and 321 seqq.

† Audiant qui non ceciderunt, ne cadant; audiant qui ceciderunt, ut surgant.

has ever yet dared to taunt with cowardice the brave mountaineers of Lucerne, Schwitz, Uri, Unterwald, and Zug, who inherit the faith, the country, and the unconquerable spirit of William Tell. The recent occurrences in Switzerland prove that this spirit has not flagged in the lapse of centuries, that Catholicity is not incompatible with bravery; and that soldiers who pray, both before and after battle, are under the special protection of the great God of battles; though He, for His own wise and inscrutable purposes, may permit them sometimes to be overwhelmed by superior numbers.

But whoever will read De Haller's history must be convinced, that the Swiss Catholics were much more forbearing and tolerant than the Swiss Protestants. The former, in general, allowed the latter the free exercise of their religion in places where these were in the minority; whereas there are, indeed, but few instances on record, where the latter accorded the same privilege to the former under similar circumstances. Did our limits permit, we might go fully into the comparison, and prove the accuracy of our remark by undeniable evidence. But we must be content with a marginal reference,\* and with the following touching anecdote, the scene of which is laid in the city of Soleure.

The Protestant party had sought to gain the ascendancy in this place, by entirely overthrowing the Catholic religion. For this purpose they seized upon the moment when nearly all the members of the council were absent, for entering into a conspiracy to take possession of "the arsenal and of the Franciscan church, to surprise the priests in their beds, and to massacre all the Catholics in case of resistance."† The conspiracy was, however, discovered to the *avoyer*, or chief magistrate, left in charge of the city—Nicholas de Wengi; and he took every prudent precaution against the meditated attack. On the 30th day of October, 1533, at one hour after midnight, the conspirators rushed to the assault; but they

---

\* De Haller, pp. 72, 150 note, 156, 272, etc.

† Ibid., p. 157.

were amazed to find nearly half the city turned out ready to receive them, and to defend themselves to the last extremity. After a sharp encounter, in which the arsenal was successively taken and retaken, without, however, any effusion of blood, the conspirators were finally driven off. But, though beaten, these had not yet given up the contest. They retired beyond the bridge, and having intrenched themselves, began to insult the Catholics. Indignant, the latter rushed to the arsenal, brought a cannon to bear upon the Protestant intrenchment, and fired one shot, but without effect. Just as they were preparing to fire another, the venerable *avoyer* Wengi rushed, out of breath, before the cannon's mouth, and exclaimed: "Beloved and pious fellow-citizens, if you wish to fire against the other side, I will be your first victim; consider better the state of things."\* His interposition was effectual; calm was restored; and the insurgents left the city.

We conclude this chapter, already long enough, by glancing rapidly at the war of Cappell in 1531, the first great religious war that ever was waged in Switzerland.† And we do this the more willingly, because it seems to us that there is a striking parallelism between this first and the last religious war to which we have already alluded. In both, the Catholics acted strictly on the defensive; in both, Lucerne was at the head of the Catholic party; in both, the genuine children of Tell proved themselves worthy of him, of their ancestral glory, of their country. There is, however, this important difference in the two wars, that whereas in the first the Catholics were triumphant, in the last, after having performed prodigies of valor, they were finally overwhelmed by main force.

In the beginning of the year 1531, the Protestant cantons, and especially Zurich, flagrantly violated the treaty concluded in 1529, by which the Catholic and Protestant cantons had

---

\* De Haller, p. 159.

† There had been some troubles in 1529, which were, however, settled without much effusion of blood.

mutually promised not to molest or interfere with one another on account of religion. After having fomented troubles in various districts partly under the control of the Catholic cantons, Zurich at length openly invaded the territory of St. Gall, and issued a decree forbidding the five neighboring Catholic cantons to trade with her subjects in corn and salt. The object of this embargo was, to cut off from the Catholic mountaineers the supplies which they had been in the habit of deriving by commerce from those living in the plains, and thereby *to starve* them into acquiescence in the glorious work of the Reformation! Zuingli and the preachers openly clamored for the blood of the Catholics, in their public harangues in Zurich. Here is an extract from one of the great Swiss reformer's sermons, delivered on the 21st September, 1531:

"Rise up, attack; the five cantons are in your power. I will march at the head of your ranks, and the nearest to the enemy. Then you will feel the power of God, for when I shall harangue them with the truth of the word of God, and shall say: whom seek you, O ye impious! then, seized with terror and with panic, they will not be able to answer, but they will fall back, and will take to flight, like the Jews on the mountain of Olives at the word of Christ. You will see that the artillery which they will direct against us, will turn against themselves, and will destroy them. Their pikes, their halberds, and their other arms, shall not hurt you, but will hurt them."\*

This discourse was printed and circulated; but alas for the prophetic faculty of the reformer! The event falsified his prediction in every particular. And, as Zuingli himself marked the preparations the five cantons were making for the coming struggle, even his own heart failed him; and the lately inspired prophet of God dwindled down into a miserable poltroon, overcome by terror, and pretending to have had strange presentiments, and observed strange signs in the heavens! Nevertheless, the Zurichers compelled him to march at their head to the village of Cappel, near the confines of the hostile cantons.

---

\* Quoted by De Haller, pp. 78, 79, note.

Here the two armies encountered; but fiery and fanatical as were the Zuinglians, they could not withstand the impetuous charge of the brave Swiss mountaineers. These carried every thing before them. The Zurichers took to flight in great disorder, with the loss of "nineteen cannon, four stands of colors, all their baggage, and of at least fifteen hundred men, among whom were twenty-seven magistrates, and FIFTEEN PREACHERS."\* Zuingle, the apostle of Switzerland, fell, sword in hand, fighting the battles of the Lord, as never apostle had fought them before!

The Zurichers, however, recovered from their fright in a few days, and on the 21st of October,† "having been reinforced by their allies of Saint Gall, of Toggenburg, of Thurgavia, and even of the Grisons, of Berne, of Bâle, and of Soleure, they again attacked the Catholics with very superior forces; but they were a second time defeated at the mountain of Zug, and took to flight in disorder, abandoning their artillery, their money, and their baggage."‡

The Catholic army now marched in triumph almost to the very walls of Zurich, after having a third time defeated the Zurichers, and driven them from their position.§ The Zuinglians, thus humbled by defeat, were now disposed to accede to the terms of peace proposed by the Catholic cantons. The treaty bound the Zurichers "to leave the five cantons, with their allies and adherents, from the present to all future time, in peaceable possession of *their ancient, true, and undoubted Christian faith*, without molesting or importuning them with disputes or chicanery, and renouncing all evil intentions, stratagems, and finesse; and that, on their side, the five cantons would leave the Zurichers and their adherents free in their belief; that in the common districts, of which the cantons were co-sovereigns, the parishes which had embraced the

\* Quoted by De Haller, pp. 79, 80.

† The battle of Cappell was fought on the 11th of October.

‡ De Haller, p. 81.

§ Ibid., p. 83.

new faith, might retain it if it suited them, that those which had not yet renounced the ancient faith would also be free to retain it, and that, in fine, those who should wish to return to the *true and ancient Christian faith* would have the right to do so.\* The Zurichers further bound themselves to pay or rather to restore to the five cantons, the money which the latter had expended in the difficulties of 1529; and to replace, at their own expense, the ornaments destroyed or forcibly taken from the different churches during the preceding years.

Thus terminated the war of Cappell. It left the Catholics in the ascendant, and contributed more than any thing else to check the headlong progress of the Swiss Reformation.

---

## CHAPTER VII.

### REACTION OF CATHOLICITY AND DECLINE OF PROTESTANTISM.

Two parallel developments—The brave old ship—Modern Protestantism quite powerless—A “thorough godly reformation” needed—Qualities for a reformer—The three days’ battle—The puzzle—A thing doomed—Which gained the victory?—The French revolution—Ranké and Hallam—The rush of waters stayed—Persecution—Protestant spice—The Council of Trent—Revival of piety—The Jesuits—Leading causes and practical results—Decline of Protestantism—Apt comparison—What stemmed the current?—Thread of Ariadne—Divine Providence—Reaction of Catholicity—Casaubon and Grotius—Why they were not converted—Ancient and modern Puseyism—Justus Lipsius and Cassander—The inference—Splendid passage of Macaulay—Catholicity and enlightenment—The Church indestructible—General gravitation to Rome—The circle and its center.

No fact in the entire history of the Reformation is perhaps more remarkable, than that which is presented by the speedy decline of Protestantism, on the one hand, and the no less

---

\* De Haller, p. 85.



rapid reaction of Catholicity on the other. A rapid glance at the history of these opposite developments of the two systems of religion will throw much additional light on their respective characters, and will serve to explain to us still more fully what we have been endeavoring thus far to elucidate; the character, causes, and manner of the Reformation. It is in accordance with a divine maxim, to judge the tree by its fruits; and we propose, in the present chapter, to make a general application of this rule; reserving, however, more special details on the subject to those which will follow.

The Reformation swept over the world like a violent storm: and it left as many ruins in its course. It threatened to overturn every thing, and bear down all things in its impetuous course. So rapid was its work of destruction, that its admirers and partisans confidently predicted the speedy downfall of the old religion, and the triumphant establishment of the new ones on its ruins. Even many of those who remained steadfast in the ancient faith, though firmly relying on the solemn promises of Christ, yet trembled not a little for the safety of the Church. Jesus seemed to be asleep, while the tempest was so furiously raging on the sea of the world; and His disciples, who were in the good old ship of the Church tossed on the waves, like their prototypes of the gospel, "came to him, and awaked him, saying: 'Lord save us, we perish.' And Jesus said to them: 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?' Then rising up He commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm."\*

Such was precisely the phenomenon presented by the history of the Church in the sixteenth century. Soon the storm of the Reformation had spent its fury, and settled down into "a great calm;" the calm of indifferentism and infidelity on the lately troubled sea of Protestantism, and of peace and security on the broad ocean of Catholicism. When men's minds had had time to recover from the excitement produced by the first

---

\* St. Matthew, viii: 24-26.

movements of the Reformation, they were enabled to estimate more justly the motives and causes of this revolution. The result was, that many enlightened Protestants returned to the bosom of the Catholic Church; while others, gifted with less grace, or indued with less moral courage, plunged madly into the vortex of infidelity. Thus Catholicity, far from being extinguished, was, by a powerful reaction, speedily reinstated in its former position of impregnable strength; while its enemies, so lately boasting of their victory, were weakened by division and soon dwindled away.

Like the sturdy oak of the forest, which, instead of being thrown down by the storm, vanquishes its fury, and even sends its roots further into the earth in consequence of the agitation of its branches; so also the tree of the Church, planted by Christ and watered with His blood and that of his countless martyrs, successfully resisted the violence of the storm of Protestantism, and became, in consequence of it, more firmly and solidly fixed in the soil of the world—more strongly “rooted and founded in charity.”\*

Nothing is more certain in all history than this wonderful two-fold development. Even D'Aubigné, surely an unexceptionable witness, admits its entire truth, however he may seek to disguise it by the thin mantle of sophistry. Speaking of the decline of modern Protestantism, he employs this emphatic language. “But modern Protestantism, like old Catholicism (!), is, in itself, a thing from which nothing can be hoped—a thing quite powerless. Something very different is necessary to restore to men of our day the energy which saves.”†—So that, the experiment of Protestantism, notwithstanding all the noise it has made in the world, and all its loud boasting about having destroyed superstition and enlightened mankind, has still turned out a complete failure, even according to the explicit avowal of its most unscrupulous advocate! It has been enlightening and saving the world now for full three hundred

---

\* Ephesians, iii : 17.

† D'Aubigné, vol. i. Preface, p. ix.

years; and in the end it has lost itself, and become "a thing quite powerless, from which nothing can be hoped!"

A new Reformation is now necessary to *reform* the old one, and to impart to it "the energy which saves." D'Aubigné, we presume, is to be the father of this new "thorough-godly" Reformation. We wish him joy of his new apostleship, and hope he may succeed better than his predecessors. He has, we humbly think, all the qualities requisite for a reformer, according to the approved type of the sixteenth century: a smattering of learning, a sanctimonious air, in which he greatly excels some of his predecessors, a skill in sophistry,—which has, however, the admirable simplicity of not being always even specious; and, to crown all, an utter recklessness of truth.

We will here give a passage from his pages, which has the double merit of exhibiting the gist of his theory on our present subject, and of being a perfect curiosity of its kind. It is an attempt to answer a writer of the Port Royal,\* who had compared the religious struggle of the last three centuries to a battle of three days' duration; and who had accumulated evidence to prove that the infidel philosophers of France, who brought about the French revolution, had but carried out the principles broached by the reformers. Our author "willingly adopts the comparison, but not the part that is allotted to each of these days." He politely declines receiving the well deserved compliment, which the Frenchman was paying him with his most gracious bow. He says:

"No, each of those days had its marked and peculiar characteristic. On the first, (the sixteenth century) the word of God triumphed, and Rome was defeated; and philosophy, in the person of Erasmus, shared in the defeat. On the second (the seventeenth century), we admit that Rome, her authority, her discipline, and her doctrine, are again seen on the point of obtaining the victory, through the intrigues of a far-famed society (the Jesuits), and the power of the scaffold, aided by certain leaders of eminent character, and others of lofty genius. The third day (the eighteenth century), human phi-

---

\* Port Royal, par Sainte Beuve, vol. i, p. 20.

logy arises in all its pride, and finding the battle field occupied, not by the gospel, but by Rome, it quickly storms every intrenchment, and gains an easy conquest. The first day's battle was for God, the second for the priest, and the third for reason—what shall the fourth be?"\*

Aye, that's the puzzle! He piously hopes that it will be for "the triumph of Him to whom triumph belongs;"† that is, for his own new system of reformation, which is to be but the "reappearance" of the old. But this is manifestly hoping against all hope; for modern Protestantism, he confesses, is "a powerless *thing*." It has settled down into indifference and an almost mortal lethargy, in all those countries where it was first established, and where the progress of enlightenment has laid bare to the world its endless vagaries and ever growing inconsistencies—its hopeless powerlessness. Its tendency is necessarily downward; it bears in its own bosom the seeds of death; it must share the fate of all other merely human institutions, and must afford another verification of our blessed Saviour's prophetic declaration: "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."‡ No human eloquence nor effort can prevent it from meeting this doom, the seal of which is already, in fact, branded on its forehead, D'Aubigné himself being our witness!

It is needless for us to dwell long in the examination of this pretty theory about the "three days' battle." The triumph which he ascribes to the Reformation on the first day was not real; it was scarcely even apparent. Notwithstanding the premature shouts of victory raised by the reformed party, the old Church still retained a vast ascendancy in point of numbers, of extension, and also, as we hope to prove in the sequel, of intelligence. In compensation for her losses on the battle field of Europe, she gained great accessions to her numbers in the East Indies, in Asia, and in the new world, which her navigators had discovered and her missionaries had converted. When a portion of Europe spurned her voice, she "turned to

\* D'Aubigné, vol. iii, p. 304.

† Ibid.

‡ St. Matthew, xv: 13.

the Gentiles," and waved the banner of her cross in triumph over new worlds. She certainly then clearly gained the advantage, even in the first day's battle.

In the second, she was avowedly in the ascendant. During it, she, to a great extent, retrieved her losses, even in Europe itself. Of course, all the talk about "the intrigues of a far-famed society and the power of the scaffold," is mere palaver. We shall soon prove it to be little better, on unquestionable Protestant authority. As to the scaffold, we hope to show hereafter,\* by a mass of evidence which can not be answered, that it was much more frequently erected by those who raised the clamor for the emancipation of thought, than by those who continued to abide quietly in the old Church.

In the third day's battle, Catholicity again triumphed. The French revolution was, in fact, but the "reappearance" of the "great Reformation," in another and more terrific shape. The French infidels made at least as much noise about liberty of thought, and they inveighed as fiercely against the corruptions of the Catholic Church, as had been done by the reformers two and a half centuries before. The former did little more, in fact, than catch up the Babel-like sounds of the latter, and re-echo them, in a voice of thunder, throughout Europe. But this mere human thunder was finally drowned by the divine thunder of the Vatican! Rome conquered the refractory daughter, as she had conquered the refractory mother. If she alone "occupied the battle field," it was because the Protestants had retired from it; had ingloriously fled, and left Christianity to its fate, during the continuance of this its fiercest struggle with infidelity! Did Protestants win even one laurel in that ensanguined battle field? Can they count even one martyr who fell a victim in that bloody effort to put down Christianity? The Catholic clergy were massacred in hundreds; they poured out their blood like

---

\* In Chapter xii, "On the influence of the Reformation on Religious Liberty."

water, for the defense of religion. Did the French infidels attack Protestants? If they did not—and they certainly did not—then how are we to explain this singular phenomenon, but on the principle of a sympathetic feeling? Men seldom go to battle against their secret or open friends and allies!

To show the rapid decline of Protestantism, after the first fifty years of its violent existence; and to unfold the parallel reaction of Catholicism, we had intended to present a rapid analysis of what a famous living Protestant writer of Germany—Leopold Ranké—has abundantly proved on the subject, in his late “History of the Papacy during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.”\* But Henry Hallam, another eminent Protestant writer of great research and authority, has anticipated us in our labor. In his Introduction to the History of Literature, already quoted, he follows Ranké, and presents every thing of consequence, bearing on our present subject, which the eminent German historian had more fully exhibited, as the result of much patient labor and research. Hallam also adds to the recital many things of his own. His work has thus greatly abridged our labor, and we shall do little more than cull from its pages, and put into order, what may best serve to elucidate the matter in hand. We presume that no impartial man will question our authorities.

The decline of Protestantism, and the reaction of Catholicism were intimately connected: they went hand in hand. The same causes that explain the one, will in a great measure account for the other; with perhaps this exception, that Protestantism, like all other merely human institutions, carried within its own bosom an intrinsic principle of dissolution; whereas Catholicity, on the other hand, had within itself, strongly developed, the principle of vitality and of permanency. These two opposite characteristics are, in fact, eminently distinctive of the two systems.

---

\* “Histoire de la Papauté pendant les xvi et xvii siècles.” Traduite de l’Allemand par M. J. B. Haiber. 4 vols. 8vo. A Paris, 1838.

According to Hallam, Protestantism began to decline, and Catholicity to gain ground, shortly after the middle of the sixteenth century. The immediate disciples of the reformers, after the death of the latter, soon lost the fierce and warlike spirit originally manifested by those who had reared the banner of revolt against Rome. The enthusiasm of the first onslaught speedily died away, and the principle of hatred, which had originated the Reformation, was gradually weakened. A counter principle of love—the very essence of Christianity and of God himself—gradually gained the ascendant even in the bosom of many among those who, in a moment of fierce excitement, had been temporarily estranged from the Catholic Church. The consequence was, that vast bodies of Protestants re-entered its pale.

Both Ranké and Hallam bear evidence to the truth of these remarks. The latter says:

“This prodigious increase of the Protestant party in Europe after the middle of the century (xvi) did not continue more than a few years. It was checked and fell back, not quite so rapidly or completely as it came on, but so as to leave the antagonist Church in perfect security.” After a tedious apology for entering on this subject in a history of literature, he proposes “to dwell a little on the leading causes of this retrograde movement of Protestantism; a fact,” he continues, “as deserving of explanation as the previous excitement of the Reformation itself, though from its more negative character, it has not drawn so much of the attention of mankind. Those who behold the outbreking of great revolutions in civil society or in religion, will not easily believe that the rush of waters can be stayed in its course; that a pause of indifference may come on, perhaps very suddenly, or a reaction bring back nearly the same prejudices and passions (!) as those which men had renounced. Yet this has occurred not very rarely in the annals of mankind, and never on a larger scale than in the history of the Reformation !”\*

He then proceeds to assign some of the leading causes which, according to his view, “stayed the rush of waters” of the revolution, called by courtesy the Reformation. After speaking of the stern policy of Philip II. of Spain, and as-

---

\* Introduction to the History of Literature, etc., sup. cit. vol. i, p. 272.

signing undue prominence to the inquisition, "which soon extirpated the remains of heresy in Italy and Spain"—into which countries Protestantism never penetrated, at least to any extent, and therefore could not be "extirpated"—he next alludes to the civil wars in France between the Huguenots and the Catholics, and then comes down to Germany. "But in Bavaria, Albert V., with whom, about 1564, this reaction began; in the Austrian dominions, Rodolph II.; in Poland, Sigismund III.; by shutting up churches, and by discountenancing in all respects their Protestant subjects, contrived to change a party once powerful, into an oppressed sect."\*

We hate persecution, no matter what is made the pretext for its exercise; but every candid man must allow that, in resorting to these measures of severity, the German Catholic princes did but repay their Protestant subjects in their own coin. If they took from them their churches, it must be borne in mind that those same churches were originally erected by Catholics, to whom they rightfully belonged, and that, in the first effervescence of the Reformation, they had been seized on violently by the Protestant party. They did but take back by law, what had been wrested from the rightful owners by lawless violence, and what would not have been otherwise surrendered. If "they discountenanced their Protestant subjects," it was only after a long and bitter experience of the troubles they had caused, of the riots and conflagrations they had brought about in the abused name of religion and of liberty, and of the utter fruitlessness of conciliatory measures.

Besides, had not the German Protestant princes proceeded with still greater harshness against their Catholic subjects, whose only crime was their calm and inoffensive adherence to the religion of their fathers? The account was certainly more than balanced, as we shall show more fully hereafter.†

---

\* Introduction to the History of Literature, etc., sup. cit. vol. i, p. 273.

† In Chapter xii.



These facts constitute at least extenuating circumstances; which a man of Mr. Hallam's moderate principles and love of historic justice should not have wholly concealed. But, we presume, he deemed it expedient to add a little Protestant spice to his narrative, in order to season for the palate of his English Protestant readers the otherwise insipid viands of admissions in favor of Catholicity.

One leading cause of the reaction of Catholicity, according to him, was the promulgation and general adoption of the decrees of the Council of Trent.

"The decrees of the Council of Trent were received by the spiritual princes of the empire (German) in 1566; 'and from this moment,' says the excellent historian who has thrown most light on this subject, 'began a new life for the Catholic Church in Germany.'"

We heartily concur in the truth of this remark. Divine Providence, which draws good out of evil, wisely brought about the Council of Trent, and watched over its protracted and often interrupted labors, till they were brought to a happy termination. This was, in fact, the only legal, as well as the only adequate remedy to the evils of the Church in the sixteenth century. The Tridentine canons and decrees for reformation exercised a powerful influence throughout Christendom. Through them, faith was everywhere settled on an immovable basis, local abuses disappeared, and piety revived. The Reformation was the indirect cause of all this good; and in this point of view, if in no other, it may claim our gratitude.

The revival of piety, through the influence of the Tridentine Council, is thus attested by Mr. Hallam:

"The reaction could not, however, have been effected by any efforts of the princes, against so preponderating a majority as the Protestant churches had obtained, if the principles that originally actuated them had retained their animating influence, or had not been opposed by more efficacious resistance. Every method was adopted to revive an attachment to the ancient religion, insuperable by the love of novelty, or the power of argu-

---

\* Ranké, ii, p. 46. Hallam, Chapter x.

ment (!). A stricter discipline and subordination were introduced among the clergy : they were early trained in seminaries, apart from the sentiments and habits, the vices and virtues (!) of the world. The monastic orders resumed their rigid observances." \*

Speaking of the important influence of the Jesuits in bringing about this Catholic renovation, he says :

"But, far above all the rest, the Jesuits were the instruments for regaining France and Germany to the Church they served. And we are more closely concerned with them here, that they are in this age among the links between religious opinion and literature. We have seen in the last chapter with what spirit they took the lead in polite letters and classical style ; with what dexterity they made the brightest spirits of the rising generation, which the Church had once dreaded and checked (!) her most willing and effective instruments. The whole course of liberal studies, however deeply grounded in erudition, or embellished by eloquence, took one direction, one perpetual aim—the propagation of the Catholic faith. . . . They knew how to clear their reasoning from scholastic pedantry and tedious quotation for the simple and sincere understandings which they addressed ; yet, in the proper field of controversial theology, they wanted nothing of sophistical (!) expertness or of erudition. The weak points of Protestantism they attacked with embarrassing ingenuity ; and the reformed churches did not cease to give them abundant advantages by inconsistency, extravagance, and passion.† At the death of Ignatius Loyola, in 1556, the order he had founded was divided into thirteen provinces besides the Roman ; most of which were in the Spanish peninsula, or its colonies. Ten colleges belonged to Castile, eight to Arragon, and five to Andalusia. Spain was for some time the fruitful mother of the disciples, as she had been of the master. The Jesuits who came to Germany were called 'Spanish priests.' They took possession of the universities : 'they conquered us,' says Ranké, 'on our own ground, in our own homes, and stripped us of a part of our own country.' This, the acute historian proceeds to say, sprung certainly from the want of understanding among the Protestant theologians, and of sufficient enlargement of mind to tolerate unessential differences. The violent opposition among each other, left a way open to these cunning strangers, who taught a doctrine not open to dispute."‡

He then proceeds to treat of the practical results brought

\* Ranké, ii, p. 46. Hallam, Chapter x, § 8.

† Ibid., § 10, where he cites Hospinian, Ranké, and Tiraboschi, the first a declared enemy of the Jesuits.

‡ Ibid., p. 274, § 11.

about by these causes. These were a rapid declension of Protestantism, and a correspondent increase of Catholicism.

"Protestantism, so late as 1578, might be deemed preponderant in all the Austrian dominions, except the Tyrol.\* In the Polish diets, the dissidents, as they were called, met their opponents with vigor and success. The ecclesiastical principalities were full of Protestants; and even in the chapters some of them might be found. But the contention was unequal, from the different character of the parties; religious zeal and devotion (!), which fifty years before had overthrown the ancient rites in northern Germany, were now more invigorating sentiments in those who secured them from further innovation. In religious struggles, where there is any thing like an equality of forces, the question soon comes to be which party will make the greatest sacrifice for its own faith. And while the Catholic self-devotion had grown far stronger, there was much more of secular cupidity, lukewarmness, and formality in the Lutheran church. In very few years, the effects of this were distinctly visible. The Protestants of the Catholic principalities went back into the bosom of Rome. In the bishopric of Wurtzburg alone, sixty-two thousand converts are said to have been received in the year 1586."†

"The reaction," he continues a little afterwards, "was not less conspicuous in other countries. It is asserted 'that the Huguenots had already lost more than two-thirds of their number in 1580;‡ comparatively, I presume, with twenty years before. And the change in their relative position is manifest from all the histories of this period. . . . At the close of this period of fifty years (A. D. 1600), the mischief done to the old Church in its first decennium (from 1550 to 1560) was very nearly repaired; the proportions of the two religions in Germany coincided with those which had existed at the pacification of Passau. The Jesuits, however, had begun to encroach a little on the proper domain of the Lutheran church; besides private conversions, which, *on account of the rigor of the laws*, not certainly less intolerant than in their own communion, could not be very prominent, they had sometimes hopes of the Protestant princes, and had once, in 1578, obtained the promise of John, king of Sweden, to embrace openly the Romish (!) faith, as he had already done in secret to Possevin, an emissary dispatched by the Pope on this important errand. But the symptoms of an opposition, very formidable in a country which has never allowed its kings to trifle with it (except at the time of the Reformation), made this wavering monarch retrace his steps. His successor, Sigismund, went further, and fell a victim to his zeal, by being expelled from his kingdom."§—Here was Protestant toleration!

---

\* Ranké, ii, p. 78. † Ib., p. 121. ‡ Ib., p. 147. § Hallam, ib., p. 275, § 14.

"This great reaction of the papal religion," he proceeds, "after the shock it had sustained in the first part of the sixteenth century, ought forever to restrain that temerity of prediction so frequent in our ears. As women sometimes believe the fashion of last year in dress to be wholly ridiculous, and incapable of being ever again adopted by any one solicitous for her beauty,\* so those who affect to pronounce on future events are equally confident against the possibility of a resurrection of opinions which the majority have for the time ceased to maintain. In the year 1560, every Protestant in Europe doubtless anticipated the overthrow of popery; the Catholics could have found little else to warrant hope than their trust in heaven. The late rush of many nations towards democratical opinions has not been so rapid and so general as the change of religion about that period. It is important and interesting to inquire what stemmed this current. We readily acknowledge the prudence, firmness, and unity of purpose that, for the most part, distinguished the court of Rome, the obedience of its hierarchy, the severity of intolerant laws, and the searching rigor of the inquisition; the resolute adherence of the great princes to the Catholic faith, the influence of the Jesuits over education: but these either existed before, or would, at least, not have been sufficient to withstand an overwhelming force of opinion.

"*It must be acknowledged that there was a principle of vitality in that religion independent of its external strength.* By the side of its secular pomp, its relaxation of morality (!), there had always been an intense flame of zeal and devotion. Superstition it might be in the many, fanaticism in a few; but both of these imply the qualities which, while they subsist, render a religion indestructible. That revival of an ardent zeal through which the Franciscans had in the thirteenth century, with some good, and much more evil effect (!), spread a popular enthusiasm over Europe, was once more displayed in counteraction of those new doctrines, that themselves had drawn their life from a similar development of moral emotion."†

Coming from the source it does, this is truly a valuable avowal. After all the talk, then, about the "downfall of popery," after all the loud boasting and high pretensions of Protestantism, the experiment of three hundred years is beginning to convince all reasonable men of what they should have known before: that the Catholic religion "has a principle of vitality in her," after all, and that she is "indestructible." It could not be otherwise: Christ himself had pledged

---

\* A very apposite comparison, truly, to illustrate the new religious fashions!

† Hallam, p. 275, 276, § 15.

his solemn word that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church, built on a rock:"\* and this simple promise solves the whole mystery which so sadly puzzled such men as Ranké and Hallam. It is the thread of Ariadne, which would have conducted them with security from the tortuous windings of the labyrinth of history, in which they appear to have been lost. It would have explained to them, among other things, why it is that in all the great emergencies of the Church, God has always raised up, as instruments to do his high behests, men and institutions just such as the exigency of the times demanded. Thus, for instance, the Franciscans and Dominicans (why did Mr. Hallam omit the latter?) in the thirteenth century, and the Jesuits and St. Charles Borromeo, to pass over many more illustrious names, in the sixteenth; together with St. Athanasius in the fourth century, St. Cyril, St. Leo, St. Chrysostom, and St. Augustine in the fifth, St. Gregory the Great in the end of the sixth, St. Gregory VII. in the eleventh, St. Bernard in the twelfth, St. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth, and many others in various other ages, are all examples of this wonderful providence of God watching over the safety of his Church, which is "the pillar and ground of the truth."†

The reaction in favor of the Catholic Church continued with redoubled force in the seventeenth century.

"The progress of the latter Church" (the Catholic), says Mr. Hallam, "for the first thirty years of the present (seventeenth) century, was as striking and uninterrupted as it had been in the final period of the sixteenth. Victory crowned its banners on every side. . . . The nobility, both in France and Germany, who in the last age had been the first to embrace a new faith, became afterwards the first to desert it. Many also of the learned and able Protestants gave evidence of the jeopardy of that cause by their conversion. It is not just, however, to infer that they were merely influenced by this apprehension. Two other causes mainly operated: one, to which we have already alluded, the authority given to the traditions of the Church, recorded by the writers called fathers, and with which it was found difficult to reconcile all the Protestant creed; another, the intolerance of the reformed churches, both Lutheran and Calvinistic, which gave as little latitude (less) as that which they had quitted."‡

---

\* St. Matth. xvi: 18. † 1 Tim. iii: 15. ‡ Hallam, vol. ii, p. 30, § 11.

"The defections," (from Protestantism) he continues, "from whatever cause, are numerous in the seventeenth century. But two, more eminent than any who actually renounced the Protestant religion, must be owned to have given evident signs of wavering, Casaubon and Grotius. The proofs of this are not founded merely on anecdotes which might be disputed, but on their own language.\* Casaubon was staggered by the study of the fathers, in which (whom?) he discovered many things, especially as to the Eucharist, which he could not in any manner reconcile with the tenets of the French Huguenots. Perron used to assail him with arguments he could not parry. If we may believe this cardinal, he was on the point of declaring publicly his conversion, before he accepted the invitation of James I. to England: and even while in England, he promoted the Catholic cause more than the world was aware."—After a feeble endeavor to impair the validity of this statement of Perron, he adds: "Yet if Casaubon, as he had much inclination to do, being on ill terms with some in England, and disliking the country, had returned to France, it seems probable that he would not long have continued in what, according to the principles he had adopted, would appear a schismatical communion."†

"Grotius," he says, "was, from the time of his turning his attention to theology, almost as much influenced as Casaubon by primitive authority, and began, even in 1614, to commend the Anglican church for the respect it showed, very unlike the rest of the reformed, to that standard.‡ But the ill usage he sustained at the hands of those who boasted their independence of papal tyranny (!); the caresses of the Gallican clergy after he had fixed his residence at Paris;§ the growing dissensions and virulence of the Protest-

---

\* In a very lengthy and learned note, he here accumulates evidence from the writings and correspondence of Casaubon, in support of the statement made in the text. He also speaks at length of the labors of the learned Cardinal Perron.

† Hallam, vol. ii, p. 30, § 11.

‡ Truly, as the wisest of men has said, there is nothing new under the sun. Grotius, Casaubon, and many other learned Protestants, more than two hundred years ago, seem to have taken the identical ground now or lately occupied by the Puseyites in England. This will appear from a perusal of the copious notes of Hallam on their writings. (Ibid.) Speaking of the effort of Grotius to extract from the Council of Trent a meaning favorable to his own semi-catholic views, he says: "his aim was to search for subtle interpretations, by which he might profess to believe the words of the Church, though conscious that his sense was not that of the imposers. It is needless to say that this is not very ingenuous," etc. Perhaps the history of Grotius and Casaubon may serve to throw additional light on the end and aim of the Puseyite controversy.

§ It is remarkable that Grotius, persecuted by brother Protestants in Holland, found a peaceful shelter from the storm in Catholic France!

ants; the choice that seemed alone to be left in their communion between a fanatical anarchy, disintegrating every thing like a church on the one hand, and a domination of bigoted and vulgar ecclesiastics on the other; made him gradually less and less averse to the comprehensive and majestic unity of the Catholic hierarchy, and more and more willing to concede some point of uncertain doctrine, or some form of ambiguous expression. This is abundantly perceived, and has been often pointed out, in his *Annotations on the Consultation of Cassander*, written in 1641; in his *Animadversions on Rivet*, who had censured the former treatise as inclining to popery; in the *Votum pro Pace Ecclesiasticâ*, and in the *Rivetiani Apologetici Discussio*; all which are collected in the fourth volume of the theological works of Grotius. These treatises display a uniform and progressive tendency to defend the Church of Rome in every thing that can be reckoned essential to her creed; and in fact he will be found to go further in this direction than Cassander.\*

But, alas! neither Casaubon nor Grotius ever penetrated beyond the threshold of the temple of Catholicity. Though they seem to have had light enough to know and to love the truth, yet were they not worthy the gift of faith, which is granted to those only who become "as little children" for Christ's sake. We have already seen by what circumstances the former was prevented from entering the Catholic pale. Of the latter Hallam says:

"Upon a dispassionate examination of all these testimonies, we can hardly deem it an uncertain question whether Grotius, if his life had been prolonged, would have taken the easy leap which still remained; and there is some positive evidence of his design to do so. But, dying on a journey, and in a Protestant country, this avowed declaration (in favor of Catholicity) was never made."†

It is dangerous to tamper with the proffered grace of heaven, or to put off conversion! The learned Lipsius went further; he was faithful to grace, and "took the easy (not so easy) leap" into the Catholic Church. Hallam tells us that he spent the latter years of his life "in defending legendary miracles, and in waging war against the honored dead of the

---

\* Hallam, vol. ii, p. 32-35, § 13. Cassander was a Catholic theologian, who was commissioned by the emperor Ferdinand to write a work to conciliate the Protestant party. Many think that, in executing this task, he had, through the best motives no doubt, conceded too much. He died in 1566, aged 53 years.

† Ibid., p. 35. § 16.



Reformation!"\* This remark was, of course, intended by the historian as an evidence of his own Protestant orthodoxy, and as a *douceur* to English bigotry. This unworthy virulence, however, but enhances the more the value of his previous admissions in favor of Catholicity, which could have been wrung from him only by the sternest evidence of facts. Justus Lipsius was a prodigy of classical learning and erudition. He became a most exemplary Catholic, and died at Louvain in 1606.

We have now completed our rapid analysis of the facts connected with the decline of Protestantism on the one hand, and the reaction of Catholicity on the other. We have shown, on unquestionable Protestant authority, the existence and extent of both these parallel developments. Every candid man will easily draw the obvious inference from these remarkable results of the two opposite systems: which is, that Protestantism was a human, and Catholicity a divine institution. We can explain the facts in no other way. To attempt to explain them on the principles of mere human philosophy is a miserable fallacy. If Protestantism was true, it would have conquered and endured; if Catholicity was false, it must have fallen. What is human is changeable, and liable to decline and decay; what is divine has the principle of vitality strong within it, and abideth forever. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

We will close our remarks on this subject by a well-known avowal of another Protestant writer of great eminence, Thomas Babington Macaulay, whose testimony, though already often quoted, is too apposite to the matter in hand to be here omitted. The passage is taken from an article in the *Edinburg Review* on Ranké's *History of the Papacy*, another circumstance which would seem fairly to entitle it to a place in this chapter.

"There is not, and there never was, on this earth, a work so well deserving of examination as the Roman Catholic Church. The history of

---

\* Hallam, vol. ii, p. 35, § 16.



that Church joins together the two great ages of human civilization. No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon ; and when cameleopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre. The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday, when compared with the line of the Roman Pontiffs. This line we trace back, in an unbroken series, from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century, to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth ; and far beyond the time of Pepin, the august dynasty extends until its origin is lost in the twilight of fable ! (Was the apostolic age “the twilight of fable ?”) The republic of Venice came next in antiquity. But the republic of Venice was modern when compared with the Papacy ; and the republic of Venice is gone, and the Papacy remains. The Papacy remains, not in decay, nor a mere antique, but full of life and youthful vigor. The Catholic Church is still sending forth, to the furthest ends of the world, missionaries as zealous as those who landed in Kent with Augustine, and still confronting hostile Kings with the same spirit with which she confronted Attila. *The number of her children is greater than in any former age.* Her acquisitions in the new world have more than compensated her for what she has lost in the old. Her spiritual ascendancy extends over the vast countries which lie between the plains of the Missouri and Cape Horn, countries which, a century hence, may not improbably contain a population as large as that which now inhabits Europe. The members of her communion are certainly not fewer than a hundred and fifty millions,\* and it will be difficult to show that all the other Christian sects united amount to one hundred and twenty millions.†

“Nor do we see any sign which indicates that the term of her long dominion is approaching. She saw the commencement of all the governments, and of all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world ; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon set foot on Britain—before the Frank had passed the Rhine—when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch—when idols were still worshiped in the Temple of

---

\* The number of Catholics in the world has been variously stated. An official statistical account, lately published in Rome, makes the number 160,842,424. Malte Brun estimates it at above 164,000,000 ; and others have stated it at 180 or even 200,000,000. The Roman statement is perhaps the most to be relied on. It does not at least exceed ; it may even fall below the mark, in consequence of the probable incompleteness of the returns.

† This embraces the Greek and Oriental churches, and is still doubtless excessive. The total number of Protestants, including free-thinkers, etc., is not probably over 50,000,000.

**Mecca.** And she may still exist in undiminished vigor, when some traveler from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's!"

Truly splendid testimony to the vitality of the Catholic Church, coming, as it does, from the pen of a sworn enemy—of a Scotchman and a Presbyterian! Speaking of the trite remark that, as the world becomes more enlightened, it will renounce Catholicity and embrace Protestantism, he says:

"Yet we see that, during these two hundred and fifty years Protestantism has made no conquests worth speaking of. Nay, we believe, that as far as there has been a change, that change has been in favor of the Church of Rome. We can not therefore feel confident that the progress of knowledge will necessarily be fatal to a system, which has, to say the least, stood its ground in spite of the immense progress which knowledge has made since the days of Queen Elizabeth." He a little after adds: "four times since the authority of the Church of Rome was established in western Christendom, has the human intellect risen up against her. Twice she remained completely victorious. Twice she came forth from the conflict bearing the marks of cruel wounds, but with the principle of life still strong within her. When we reflect on the tremendous assaults which she has survived, we find it difficult to conceive in what way she is to perish!"

Yes—it must be avowed: the Catholic Church is indestructible, and therefore divine! You might as well try to blot out the sun from the heavens, as to extinguish the bright light of the Catholic Church from the earth! Clouds may, indeed, hide for a time the sun's disc from the eye of the beholder; but the sun is still there, the same as when he shone forth before upon us with his most brilliant light: so also, the clouds of persecution and prejudice may cover for a time the fair face of the Catholic Church; but the eye of faith penetrates those dark clouds, and assures us, that though partially concealed, she is still there! And when those clouds will clear away, she will again shine out with a more brilliant and a more cheering light than ever! He who said: "Heaven and earth may pass away, but my words shall not pass away," has also pronounced that "The gates of hell shall *not* prevail against her."

Perhaps the most remarkable circumstance in the tendency

of modern society, is the general and manifest reaction in favor of Catholicity throughout the world, and especially in Protestant countries. There seems to be a universal gravitation of all spirits towards Rome!\* Germany, the first theater of the Reformation, seems to have led the way in this awakening. Besides the works of Voigt, Hurter, and Ranké, which are well known, there are also: the Universal History and the Journeys of the Popes, by the great Protestant historian, John Müller; the History of the Princes of the House of Hohenstaufen, by the famous Raumer; the History of the Church, and the History of Italy, by M. Leo;—not to mention a host of other works by eminent German Protestant writers of the day, all of which evidence, by their spirit and their disposition to do at least partial justice to the Popes and to the old religion, this wonderful resuscitation of Catholic feeling in Protestant Germany. England, Scotland, and the United States even, have participated, to a certain extent, in this movement. We trust that De Maistre's prophetic remark to the effect, that when sectarianism should have run through the whole circle of error, it would return again to the great Catholic center of truth, is on the eve of its fulfillment!†

What we will now proceed to prove in relation to the manifold influences of the Reformation, on religion and on society, will, we trust, throw additional light upon the matter we have treated in this chapter; and it may serve also greatly to explain why it was that, after a brief storm of excitement, Catholicity so greatly reacted and Protestantism so suddenly declined.

---

\* See the Introduction to Ranké's History of the Papacy, etc., by M. Alexandre de Saint Chéron, page xv, seqq.

† This was written about fifteen years ago; and we are sorry to have to say, that the sanguine anticipations with which we then solaced ourselves have not been fully realized by the event. Still many have returned to the Catholic Church during this time, both in England and in Germany, as well as in the United States; while, unhappily, others have imitated the dilatory tampering with divine grace which we have remarked in Casaubon and Grotius. Let such beware!

# PART III.

---

## INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON RELIGION.

### CHAPTER VIII.

#### INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON DOCTRINAL BELIEF.

"Who would ever have believed that the Reformation from the beginning would have attacked morality, dogma, and faith; or that the seditious genius of a monk could have caused so much disturbance?"—*Erasm. (Epist. Georgio Duci)*.

"As long as words a different sense will bear,  
And each may be his own interpreter,  
Our airy faith will no foundation find,  
The word's a weathercock for every wind."—*DRYDEN*.

The nature of Religion—A golden chain—Question stated—Private judgment—Church authority—As many religions as heads—D'Aubigné's theory—Its poetic beauty—Fever of logomachy—"Sons of liberty"—The Bible dissected—A hydra-headed monster—Erasmus—"Curing a lame horse"—Luther puzzled—His plaint—His inconsistency—Missions and miracles—Zuingli's inconsistency—Strange fanaticism—Storck, Münzer, Karlstadt, and John of Leyden—A new deluge—Retorting the argument—Discussion at the "Black Boar"—Luther and the cobbler—Discussion at Marburg—Luther's avowal—Breaking necks—Melancthon's lament—The inference—Protestantism the mother of infidelity—Picture of modern Protestantism in Germany by Schlegel.

RELIGION is a divinely established system, which came down from heaven to conduct man thither. By the disobedience of Adam, man, originally created upright or at least constituted in a state of righteousness, fell from grace, and was, as it were, loosed from heaven, to which he had been previously bound by the most sacred ties of fellowship. Religion may be compared to a golden chain reaching down from heaven to earth, which, according to the etymological

import of the term, *binds* man *again* to heaven.\* And to pursue the illustration a little further, as the loss of even one link would destroy the integrity of a chain, and would render it useless as a means of binding together distant objects; so also, the removal of one link from the chain of religion, would destroy its integrity and mar its lofty purpose of binding man to his God. These links are united together in three divisions; comprising severally the doctrines revealed by and through Jesus Christ, the moral precepts which He gave, and the sacraments and sacrifice which He instituted. All these are as essentially and as intimately connected together, as are the several parts of a chain. "He that offendeth in one, is guilty of all:"† because by a single offense he rebels against the authority from which the whole emanates.

Religion then consists of three parts: doctrines to be believed, commandments to be observed, and sacramental and sacrificial ordinances to be received and complied with. The third department partakes of the nature of the other two: being partly doctrinal and partly moral. In other words, the Christian Religion embraces, as essential to its very nature and divine purposes, doctrines, morals, and worship: and we propose briefly to examine the influence of the pretended Reformation on each of these separately. Was this influence beneficial? Did it really reform Religion, as it purported to do? D'Aubigné tells us: that "the reform saved Religion, and with it society."‡ We shall see hereafter what it did for society; and we will now inquire whether it "saved Religion?"

And first, what was its influence on the doctrines of Christianity? Did it teach them in greater purity, and integrity, or with greater certainty, than the Catholic Church had done? Did it shed on them a clearer or more steady light? Or did it, on the contrary, give out a very doubtful and

---

\* Some persons derive the word Religion from the Latin *re-ligo*—to bind again.

† St. James, ii : 10.

‡ D'Aubigné, vol. i, p. 67.

uncertain light; leaving the minds of men in perplexity as to the tenets to be believed; and permitting its disciples "to be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine,"\* on the stormy sea of conflicting human opinions? We shall see. It will not, however, be necessary to our inquiry, to examine the grounds which establish the truth of the various Catholic, or the falsity of the Protestant doctrines in controversy: all that will be requisite for our purpose, will be an investigation of the facts bearing on the historical question itself, as to the actual influence of the Reformation on this vital department of Religion.

The great distinctive principle of the Reformation was its rejection of Church authority, and its assertion of the right of private judgment in matters of Religion. This is the key of the new system: this the proudest boast of those who affected to bring about the "emancipation of the human mind." This is the cardinal principle of "Christian liberty," as asserted by Dr. Martin Luther, in a special work on the subject: this is the means he boastingly adopted for being rescued from the degrading "captivity of Babylon."† The Catholic Religion had taught that, in all matters of controversy, Christians were bound by the solemn command of Christ, "TO HEAR THE CHURCH."‡ Church authority was the ultima ratio—last resort—of controversy, the great means of attaining to certainty in what we are to believe or to reject; the strong bond of union among Christians. Not that the Church meant to decide on every controverted point: she only decided where she found sufficient warrant in revelation to guide her with certainty. In other matters—and they were numerous—she wisely abstained from any definition, and allowed her children a reasonable latitude of opinion, provided, however, their opinions did not either directly or

---

\* Ephesians, iv: 14.

† See the two works of Luther, "De Christianâ Libertate," and "De Captivitate Babylonica."

‡ St. Matthew, xviii: 17.

indirectly infringe on the unchangeable principles of faith. This was hallowed and consecrated ground, which was not to be trodden by the rude foot of controversy. She said to the stormy billows of proud human opinion: "Thus far shall you come, and no further: and here shall you break your boiling waves!"\*

When the reformers cast off this yoke of Church authority, and said "they would not serve" any longer, they had no alternative left, but to decide, each one for himself, what was the doctrine of Christ. Private judgment was thus necessarily substituted for the teaching of the Church: human opinion for faith. As men were differently constituted, they naturally took different views of the religion of Christ. Each one struck out a new system for himself; and soon, instead of the one Religion which had been received with reverence for ages, the world beheld the novel spectacle of almost as many religions as there were heads among the Protestant party!

D'Aubigné's theory on this subject is as curious as it is liberal—in the modern sense of this term. He thus discourses on what he calls the diversities of the Reformation:

"We are about to contemplate the diversities, or, as they have been since called, the *variations* of the Reformation. These diversities are among its most essential characters. Unity in diversity, and diversity in unity, is a law of nature, and also of the church. Truth may be compared to the light of the sun. The light comes from heaven colorless, and ever the same: and yet it takes different hues on earth, varying according to the objects on which it falls. Thus different formularies may sometimes express the same Christian truth, viewed under different aspects. How dull would be this visible creation, if all its boundless variety of shape and color were to give place to an unbroken uniformity!"†

A beautiful theory truly, and aptly illustrated! So, then, "the different formularies" of Luther, openly asserting the

---

\* Job xxxviii: 12. "Huc usque venies et non amplius; et hic confringes tumentes fluctus tuos."

† D'Aubigné, vol. iii, p. 235, in the introduction to the eleventh book, in which he treats of the controversies between the partisans of Zuingli and Luther.

real presence of Christ in the holy Sacrament, and of Zuingle flatly denying this presence, "both express the same Christian truth viewed under different aspects!" These great champions of Protestantism, as we have seen, mutually anathematized and denounced each other as children of Satan *on this very ground*, and yet, in good sooth, they maintained "the same Christian truth under different aspects!" They plainly contradicted each other on many other important points, and the Wittenberg doctor would consent to hold no communion with him of Zurich;\* and yet they maintained "the same Christian truth!" Luther said to Zuingle, who proposed mutual communion at the close of the famous conference of Marburg, in 1528, "No, no: cursed be the alliance which endangers the truth of God and the salvation of souls. Away with you: you are possessed by a different spirit from ours. But take care: before three years the anger of God will fall on you!"† And yet D'Aubigné would have us believe, that they agreed as to the substance of "Christian truth!" Verily, he must think others as credulous as he himself *seems* to be!

And then, the charming illustration from the light of the sun! It is almost a pity to spoil its poetic beauty; though even a poet would lay himself open to the most severe criticism, were his figures no more appropriate or true to nature. D'Aubigné has taken more than even a poetic license. Does the light of the sun, no matter how diversified, reflect contradictory images "of the objects on which it falls?" Is it so very uncertain, as to leave us in doubt, as to the shape and color of external objects? Does it make us the dupes of constant optical illusions? The light which the reformers professed to borrow from heaven did all this. And then, does it fall much short of blasphemy, to maintain that God is indifferent as to whether we believe truth or error; and that He delights in such a diversity of opinions as runs into open con-

---

\* In the conference of Marburg. See Audin, "Life of Luther," p. 415, 416.

† Audin, *ibid.* See also Luther's Ep. ad Jacobum, præp. Bremens.



traditions? And this too, when his well beloved Son came on earth "to bear testimony to the truth," and laid down His life to seal it with his blood! And when the Saviour pronounced the awful declaration: "He that believeth not shall be condemned;"\* which declaration referred to the necessity of belief "in *all* things whatsoever he had commanded!"†

The doctrine of private judgment, broached by the reformers, led to endless inconsistencies and contradictions. It was the prolific parent of sects almost innumerable. More than fifty‡ of these arose before the death of Luther! It was natural that it should be so: "These diversities were among the most *essential* features of the Reformation."§ The tree was only bearing its natural fruits; and the latter, according to the divine standard, are the best criterion whereby to judge of the former: "By their fruits ye shall know them."—"The Reformation, which promised to put an end to the reign of disputations theology, had, on the contrary, awakened in all minds a fondness for dispute, bordering on fanaticism: it was the fever of logomachy.|| Half a century before, men indeed disputed; but then the doctrine of the Church was not called into question: now however it was attacked on all sides. In each university, and even in every private house, Germany saw a pulpit erected for whoever pretended to have received the understanding of the divine word."¶

This raging fever of disputation has continued to burn in the bosom of Protestantism even to the present day: it has not abated in the progress of ages. True, in Germany and on the continent of Europe, it has, to a great extent, lately cooled down into a state of mortal apathy—a more dangerous symptom far than the malady which it has superseded: but

---

\* St. Mark, xvi: 16. † The parallel passage in St. Matthew, xxviii: 20.

‡ See Audin, p. 331.

§ D'Aubigné, ut supra.

|| A war of words.

¶ Audin, *ibid.*, p. 190, 191.

elsewhere, it has left the patient in the same restless and tossing condition, as formerly.

Most of the reformers found in the Bible, that a priest who had made a solemn vow of celibacy to God, might and even ought to break it, by taking a wife. The first who made this consoling discovery, were Bernard of Felkirk, abbot of Remberg, and the aged Karlstadt, archdeacon of Wittenberg. The new light which had dawned upon them was hailed with ecstasy by the lovers of "Christian liberty" throughout Germany. Some went still further, and maintained, Bible in hand, with Bucer, Capito, Karlstadt and other evangelists, that marriage was not indissoluble; and that a Christian could dismiss his wife, or even retain her, and take one or more others at the same time, after the example of the ancient patriarchs. These styled themselves "the sons of liberty"—they should have said *libertinism*.

We shall see, a little later, to what frightful consequences these horrid doctrines led!

"All the hallucinations of a disordered intellect were for a time ascribed to the Holy Ghost. Never had the divine wisdom communicated itself more liberally to the human mind! The Bible was laid open, as an anatomical subject, on an operator's table, and every doctor came with his lance in hand—as afterwards did Dumoulin—to anatomize the word of God, and to seek the spirit, which before Luther had escaped the eye of Catholicism. It was an epoch of glosses and commentaries, which time has not had the trouble of destroying, for they abounded with absurdity, and fell beneath the weight of ridicule which crushed them at their birth. There were new lights, who came to announce that they had discovered an irresistible argument against the Mass, purgatory, and prayers to the saints. This was simply to deny the immortality of the soul!"\*—This startling impiety was really maintained in full school at Geneva, by certain "new lights," who came from Wittenberg.†

Menzel, the Protestant historian of Germany, freely admits

\* Audin, p. 192.

† "Quidquid de animarum habetur immortalitate, ab antichristo ad statuendam suam culinam excogitatum est." Prateolus—Elench. voce Athei, p. 72. See also Bayle's Dictionary, art. Luther.

that division was the essential heritage of the Reformation, whose unity it fatally marred, thereby frittering away its strength. He says:

"The Protestants, blind to the unity and strength resulting from the policy of the Catholics, weakened themselves more and more by division. The reformed Swiss were almost more inimical to the Lutherans than the Catholics were, and the general mania for disputation and theological obstinacy produced divisions among the reformers themselves. When, in 1562, Bullinger set up the Helvetic Confession, to which the Pfalz also assented in Zurich, Basle refused and maintained a particular Confession."\*

From the earliest period of its history, "the hydra of the Reformation had a hundred heads. The Anabaptists believed with Münzer, that without a second baptism, man could not be saved. The Karlstadtians preached up polygamy. The Zuinglians rejected the real presence. Osiander taught that God had predestined only the elect. The Majorists taught that works were not necessary for salvation; while the followers of Flaccus accused the Majorists of popery. The Synergists preached up man's liberty. The Ubiquitarians believed, that the humanity of Christ was, like His divinity, omnipresent. Some held original sin to be the nature, substance, the essence of man; while others regarded it as a mere mode of his being. All these sects boasted of the Bible, as a sufficient rule of faith; they published confessions, composed creeds, and insisted on faith, as a condition of communion. Children of the same father, whom they had severally denied, they cursed and proscribed each other: they gave the name of heretic to, and shut the gates of heaven against, all their brethren in revolt, who happened to differ with them."† Other fanatics preached up the community of goods, with Storck and the Anabaptists; others with the prophets of Alstell, "the demolition of images, of churches, of chapels, and the adoration of the Lord on high places;"‡ and others,

---

\* History of Germany, II, 275.

† Audin, p. 208, 209. See the authorities he quotes, *ibid.*, note.

‡ Idem, p. 331.

the inutility of the law and of prayer.—The feverish spirit of innovation knew no rest; every day brought forth a new sect. And is it not so, even in our own age and country?

Erasmus thus hits off, in his own polished and caustic style, the extravagant inconsistencies of the Protestant rule of faith:

“They ask: ‘Do philosophy and learning aid us in understanding the holy books?’ I reply: ‘Will ignorance assist you?’ They say: ‘Of what authority are these councils, in which not perhaps a single member received the Holy Ghost?’ I ask in reply: ‘Is not the gift of God, probably, as rare in your conventicles?’ The Apostles would not have been believed, had they not proved the truth of their doctrines by miracles. Among you every individual must be believed on his own word. When the Apostles lulled the serpents, healed the infirm, and raised the dead to life, people were forced to believe in them, though they announced incomprehensible mysteries. Among these doctors, who tell us so many wonderful things, is there one who has been able to cure a lame horse? . . . . Give me miracles.—‘They are unnecessary: there have been enough of them:’—the bright light of the Scriptures is not so very clear, since I see so many men wander in the dark. Although we had the spirit of God, how can we be certain that we have the knowledge of His word? What must I believe, when I see, in the midst of contradictory doctrines, all lay claim to dogmatical infallibility, and rise up with oracular authority against the doctrines of those who have preceded us? Is it then likely that, during thirteen centuries, God should not have raised up, among the many holy personages he has given to His Church, a single one to whom he revealed His doctrine.”\*

Luther was often saddened by the defection of his own disciples, as well as grievously puzzled, when these played off on him the same arguments which he had used against the Pope. His cherished disciple Mathesius relates the mental anguish he endured, when, being at the castle of the Wartburg in 1521, he heard of the revolt and strange doings of Karlstadt at Wittenberg. He yielded to dejection; he seemed to himself to have been abandoned by God and by men: “His head grew weary, his forehead burned with the excitement of his mind, his eye grew dim—and he would open his

---

\* “De Libero Arbitrio.” Diatribe, and Adolf Menzel, i, 140.

window, and inhaling the ambrosial breeze, would endeavor to forget the world and its wrongs!"\*

But all his efforts to quiet his own mind proved ineffectual: he chafed like a tiger in his cage. At length he resolved, against the advice of his friends, to leave the Wartburg, and to precipitate himself into the midst of his recreant disciples at Wittenberg. He harangued them for full two hours on the wickedness of their defection from his standard; and concluded his burning invective with the following memorable sentence: "Yes, if the devil himself had entreated me"—to remove the images from the church by violence—"I would have turned a deaf ear to him!"†

The reformer draws a graphic sketch of his own perplexity in a letter to the "Christians" of Antwerp, written in 1525. We will furnish a few extracts:

"The devil has got among you: he daily sends me visitors to knock at my door. One will not hear of baptism; another rejects the sacrament of the Eucharist; a third teaches that a new world will be created by God before the day of judgment; another, that Christ is not God: in short, one this, another that. There are almost as many creeds as individuals. There is no booby, who, when he dreams, does not believe himself visited by God, and who does not claim the gift of prophecy. I am often visited by these men who claim to be favored by visions, of which they all know more than I do, and which they undertake to teach me. I would be glad they were what they profess to be. No later than yesterday one came to me: 'Sir, I am sent by God who created heaven and earth;' and then he began to preach as a veritable idiot, that it was the order of God that I should read the books of Moses for him. 'Ah! where did you find this commandment of God?' 'In the gospel of St. John!' After he had spoken much, I said to him: 'Friend, come back to-morrow, for I cannot read for you, at one sitting, the books of Moses.' 'Good-by, master; the heavenly Father, who shed his blood for us, will show us the right way through his Son Jesus. Amen!' . . . . *While the Papacy lasted there were no such divisions or dissensions: the strong man peaceably ruled the minds of men; but now one stronger is come, who has vanquished and put him to flight, and the former one storms and wishes not to depart. A spirit of confusion is thus among you, which tempts you, and seeks to withdraw you from the true path.*"

---

\* Mathesius. In Vita Lutheri, apud Audin, p. 209.

† See the harangue in Audin, p. 237, 238.

He concludes this strange epistle with these characteristic words: "Begone, ye cohort of devils, marked with the character of error: God is a spirit of peace and not of dissension."\*

But Luther could not succeed in exorcising the demons, whom his own principle of private judgment had evoked from the abyss. True, he occasionally made trial of the good old Catholic specifics for this purpose; but they proved utterly powerless in his hands. Thus, when pressed by the Anabaptists, to prove infant baptism from the Scriptures—his only rule of faith—he had recourse to the good old Catholic argument of Church authority founded on tradition! He appealed to the testimony of St. Augustine and to the teaching of the Church during his day.—"But, it is objected," he says, "what if Augustine and those whom you call and believe to be the Church, erred in this particular? But this objection can be easily impugned. If you do not admit the right, (*jus*) at least will you not admit the fact (*factum*) of this having been the belief of the Church? And to deny that this was the faith of the true and lawful Church, I deem most impious."†

Another argument, which he employed to refute the Anabaptists, was that drawn from the necessity of a lawful mission to preach the gospel, and of miracles to confirm this mission, whenever it was not derived through the ordinary channels of the Church. In a sermon delivered at Wittenberg against their prophets, in 1522, he employed this remarkable language:

"Do you wish to found a new church?—Let us see: who has sent you? From whom have you received your mission? As you give testimony of yourselves, we are not at once to believe you, but according to the advice of

\* "Ein Briefe D. Martin Luther an die Christen zu Antorf." Wittenberg, 1525, 4to. "Doct. M. Luther Briefe," tom. iii, p. 60. Cf. Audin.

† *Objicitur vero: quid si Augustinus, et quos ecclesiam vocas vel esse credis, in hac parte errarint? . . . . At eadem objectio facile impugnabitur. Si non ius, tamen factum proprie credendi in ecclesia? Hanc autem confessionem negare esse ecclesiæ illius veræ et legitimæ, arbitror impiissimum esse.*—Epist. Melancthon, 13 January, 1522.

St. John, we must try you. God has sent no one into this world who was not called by man, or announced by signs—not even excepting his own Son. The prophets derived their title from the law, and from the prophetic order, as we do from men. I do not care for you, if you have only a mere revelation to propose: God would not permit Samuel to speak, except by the authority of Heli. When the law is to be changed, miracles are necessary. Where are your miracles? What the Jews said to the Lord, we now say to you: ‘Master, we wish for a sign.’”\*

Luther often used this argument:† and yet, it might have been retorted with unanswerable force against himself. And it was retorted by Stübner and Cellarius, two of the Anabaptist prophets, whom he had attacked. The answer of the Saxon reformer is not recorded:‡ perhaps he had none to give. According to Erasmus, the reformers never succeeded even “in curing a lame horse!” Luther himself, somewhat later, acknowledged, that he had never performed any miracles, except that “he had slapped Satan in the face, and struck the Papacy in its core.”§—Astonishing miracles truly!

Luther was not alone, in thus inconsistently appealing to arguments which condemned both himself and his own cause. Many of the other principal reformers were driven to the same straits. In order to refute George Blaurock, an Anabaptist enthusiast, Zuingli used the following argument:

“If we allow every enthusiast or sophist to diffuse among the people all the foolish fancies of his heated imagination, to assemble together disciples and make a sect, we shall see the Church of Christ split up into an infinity of factions, and lose that unity which she has maintained at so great sacrifices. It is necessary then to consult the Church, and not to listen to passion or prejudice. The interpretation of Scripture is not the right of individuals, but of the Church: she has the keys, and the power of unlocking the treasures of the divine word.”||

---

\* Apud Audin, p. 238.

† As in lib. iii, c. iv. “Contra Anabaptistas;” and elsewhere.

‡ In his letter to Spalatin, in which he relates his interview with Stübner and Cellarius, Luther is silent on this retort. Epist. Spalatino, 12 Ap. 1522. Yet the Anabaptist historians relate it. Cf. Audin, p. 239.

§ See Audin, p. 238, note, for authority for this feat.

|| Zuinglius. “De Baptismo,” p. 72.—Cf. Audin, p. 240.

As might have been expected, Blaurock was not satisfied with this appeal to authority. Bullinger\* tells us, that he answered in a loud voice: "Did not you Sacramentarians break with the Pope, without consulting the Church which you abandoned—and that, too, a Church which was not of yesterday? Is it not lawful for us to abandon your church, which is but a few days old? Can not we do what you have done?"—Zuingli was nonplussed; and if even he made an attempt to reply, his answer is not recorded.

We will give a few instances of the strange fanaticism to which this same principle of private judgment naturally led. We might fill a volume with such examples: but our limits will permit of only a few.† Listen, for instance, to this startling announcement of Storck in one of his sermons:

"Behold, what I announce to you. God has sent his angel to me during the night, to tell me that I shall sit on the same throne as the archangel Gabriel. Let the impious tremble and the just hope. . . . It is to me, Storck, that heaven has promised the empire of the world. Would you desire to be visited by God? Prepare your hearts to receive the Holy Spirit. Let there be no pulpit whence to announce the word of God: no priests, no preachers, no exterior worship: let your dress be plain; your food bread and salt; and God will descend upon you."‡

Münzer, another Anabaptist, thus pleaded for the general division of property:

"Ye rich ones of the earth who keep us in bondage, who have plundered us, give us back our liberty and possessions. It is not only as men that we now demand what has been taken from us: we ask it as Christians. In the primitive Church, the apostles divided with their brethren in Jesus Christ the money that was laid at their feet. Give us back the goods you unjustly retain. Unhappy flock of Jesus Christ, how long will you groan in oppression under the yoke of the priest and the magistrate?"—"And then the prophet suddenly fell into an epileptic fit: his hair stood erect; perspiration rolled down his face, and foam issued from his mouth. The people cried out: 'silence, God visits his prophet!'"§

---

\* "In Apologia Anabaptist." P. 254.—Cf. Audin, p. 240.

† Those who wish to see more are referred to Catrou, *Histoire du Fanatisme*, tom. i; to Meshovius, Ottovius, and other writers.

‡ See Audin, p. 230.

§ Ibid., p. 231.



At the termination of his ecstasy, which continued for some minutes, the prophet cried out at the top of his stentorian voice: "Eternal God, pour into my soul the treasures of thy justice, otherwise I shall renounce thee and thy prophets."\* A Lutheran having appealed to the Bible,—“The Bible? Babel!” cried out Münzer.†

What will be thought of this strange conceit of Karlstadt?

“One day, Karlstadt was seen running through the streets of Wittenberg with the Bible in his hand, and stopping the passers-by to inquire of them the meaning of difficult passages of the sacred books: ‘What are you about?’ said the Austin friars to him. ‘Is it not written’—answered the archdeacon—‘that the voice of truth shall be heard from the lips of infants? I only accomplish the orders of heaven.’”‡

Who has not heard of the revolting obscenities of John of Leyden, and of the prophets of Munster? All of these impure extravagances, perpetrated, too, under the bright new light of the Reformation, and under its alleged sanction! Who, in fine, that has even glanced at the history of this period, has not marked the endless extravagances, the absurd conceits, the astonishing fanaticism which marked almost every day of its annals!

Truly, then “the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the flood-gates of heaven were opened;”§ and a new deluge flooded the earth, more destructive than that which had buoyed up Noah’s ark! For this destroyed only the bodies of men; that carried away and ruined men’s souls. “The flood-gates of heaven”—did we say? No, the origin of those waters must be sought elsewhere. Luther himself aids us in detecting their source. We have seen above his opinion on the subject, in his letter to the Christians of Antwerp. And in his subsequent controversies with the Sacramentarians, after having spoken of their dissensions among themselves, he said: “This is a great proof that these Sacramento-magists come not from God, but from the devil.”||

\* Meshovius, p. 4. Catrou, sup. cit.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

§ Genesis, vi: 11.

|| “An die Christen zu Reutlingen,” 5 January, 1526.

And we have also seen how triumphantly Zuingli retorted the compliment on Luther and his branch of the Reformation.

Can not we turn this, and all the other arguments employed by the several reformers to refute each other, against all of them? Can not we point to the numberless dissensions of Protestants among themselves—dissensions perpetuated a hundred fold even unto the present day—to prove against them all, that their pretended Reformation, which always produced such fruits as these, is not and can not be from God, “who is not the God of dissension, but of peace?” Can not we ask them, whence they had their mission to reform the Church? And if they answer, “from heaven;” ask them again to prove it to us by miracles? How will they, how *can* they answer these arguments, which they themselves so often wielded against one another?

It will be curious to see how the modern Protestant historian of Germany speaks of the Anabaptists and their extravagant excesses. We accordingly here present to our readers the following extracts from Menzel, who, it will be seen, substantially confirms the statements made above, and adds some new facts:

“The illiterate and the enthusiastic, however, far outstripped Luther in their ideas; instead of reforming they wished to annihilate the church, and to grasp political as well as religious liberty, and it was justly feared lest these excesses might furnish Rome with a pretext for rejecting every species of reform. ‘Luther,’ wrote their leader, Thomas Münzer, ‘merely draws the word of God from books, and twists the dead letters.’ Nicholas Storck, Münzer’s first teacher, a clothier, who surrounded himself with twelve apostles and seventy-two disciples, boasted of receiving revelations from an angel. Their rejection of infant baptism and sole recognition of that of adults as efficacious, gained for them the appellation of Anabaptists. Karlstadt joined this sect, and followed the example already given by Bartholomew Bernhardi, a priest, one of Luther’s disciples, who had married.” . . .

“The Anabaptists, repulsed by Luther, encouraged by these precedents, drew near to Zuingli, and their leader, Thomas Münzer, who had been expelled from Wittenberg, went to Waldshut on the Rhine, where, countenanced by the priest, Hubmaier, the greatest disorder took place. Zuingli declared against them, and caused several of them to be drowned [A. D. 1524],

but was, nevertheless, still regarded by Luther as a man who, under the cloak of spiritual liberty, sought to bring about political changes.”\*

Of the insurrection in which Münzer perished, he says :

“At the same time, in the summer of 1525, an insurrection, bearing a more religious character, broke out in Thuringia, where Thomas Münzer appeared as a prophet, and preached the doctrines of equality and fraternity. The insurgents were defeated by Ernest, Count von Mansfield, whose brother Albert had conceded all their demands ; and afterwards at Fulda, by Philip of Hesse, who, reinforced by Ernest, the Duke George, and the elector John of Saxony, marched on Frankenhansen, the headquarters of the rebels, who, infatuated with the belief that heaven would fight for them, allowed themselves to be slaughtered whilst invoking aid from God. Five thousand were slain. Frankenhansen was taken and pillaged, and three hundred prisoners were beheaded. Münzer was discovered in a hay-stack, in which he had secreted himself, put to the rack, and executed with twenty-six of his companions.”†

He writes as follows of the excesses committed at Leyden, which became the headquarters of the Anabaptists :

“The most extravagant folly and license ere long prevailed in the city. John Bockelson, a tailor from Leyden, gave himself out as a prophet, and proclaimed himself king of the universe ; a clothier, named Knipperdolling, and one Krechting, were elected burgomasters. A community of goods and wives was proclaimed and carried into execution. Civil dissensions ensued, but were speedily quelled by the Anabaptists. John of Leyden took seventeen wives, one of whom, Divara, gained great influence by her spirit and beauty. The city was, meanwhile, closely besieged by the expelled bishop, Francis von Waldeck, who was aided by several of the Catholic and Lutheran princes ; numbers of the nobility flocked thither for pastime, and carried on the siege against the Anabaptists, who made a long and valiant defense. The attempts of their brethren in Holland and Friesland to relieve them proved ineffectual. A dreadful famine ensued in consequence of the closeness of the siege ; the citizens lost courage and betrayed the city by night to the enemy. Most of the fanatics were cut to pieces. John, Knipperdolling, and Krechting were captured, enclosed in iron cages, and carried for six months throughout Germany, after which they were brought back to Munster to suffer an agonizing death. Divara and the rest of the principal fanatics were beheaded.”‡

To illustrate this matter still further, and to show what

---

\* History of Germany, ii, 232-3.

† Ibid., p. 243.

‡ Ibid. p. 256.

spirit originated and perpetuated the dissensions by which early Protestantism was torn into fragments, we will here exhibit a few specimens of the manner in which controversies among the reformers were then conducted. In 1524, Luther went to Jena, where he preached against the new prophets of the Anabaptists, whose arguments had been answered by their brother Protestants with the *convincing* weapons of fire and sword! Tens of thousands of the vast multitudes, whom these fanatics had misled, had been butchered; still their spirit was not wholly subdued. Karlstadt, then pastor at Jena, feeling himself aggrieved by the violence of Luther's sermon, challenged him to an oral discussion. The challenge was accepted, and the tavern of the Black Boar, where Luther lodged, was the place appointed for the meeting. After some preliminary discussion, in which the two new apostles indulged in insulting personalities, Karlstadt maintaining that Luther had meant *him* in his sermon, and Luther calling on him for proof, telling him "if he saw the likeness in the picture, it must have suited him," etc., the discussion proceeded after this wise:

Karlstadt.—Well then, I will dispute in public, and I will manifest the truth of God, or my own confusion.

Luther.—Your own folly rather, Doctor.

Karlstadt.—My confusion, which I shall bear for God's glory.

Luther.—And which will fall back on your own shoulders. I care little for your menaces. Who fears you?

Karlstadt.—Whom do I fear? My doctrine is pure; it comes from God.

Luther.—If it comes from God, why have you not imparted to others the spirit that made you break the images at Wittenberg?

Karlstadt.—I was not the only one concerned in that enterprise. It was done after a mature decision of the senate, and by the co-operation of some of your disciples, who fled in the moment of peril.

Luther.—False, I protest.

Karlstadt.—True, I protest.

Karlstadt complained a little afterwards, that Luther had condemned him at Wittenberg without previous admonition. This Luther flatly contradicted, stating that "he had brought

Philip and Pomeranius into his study," for that purpose: hereupon Karlstadt became enraged, and exclaimed: "If you speak the truth, may the d—il tear me in pieces!" The discussion ended in nothing—as most discussions of the kind do. Luther challenged Karlstadt to write against him; the latter accepted the challenge: Luther then gave him a gold florin as stake-money, and the compact was duly ratified, after the old German fashion, by two overflowing bumpers of ale.\* Never had the Black Boar of Jena been so crowded, or witnessed a spectacle of such stirring interest! And such a spectacle!

From Jena Luther proceeded to Orlamunde, where he carried on a spirited controversy, in the presence of the town council, with a cobbler theologian, named Crispin, who had recently learned—thanks to the Reformation—how to apply his craft to interpreting, if not *mending* the Bible. The discussion was long and animated; Crispin supplying his lack of argument by a stentorian voice, and by furious gesticulations. The subject was the lawfulness of images; Luther defending, and Crispin objecting; and both appealing to the Bible. What was most mortifying to the reformer, the town council sided with the cobbler, and decided against the Wittenberg doctor!

"‘So then,’ said Luther to the council, ‘you condemn me?’

"‘Most assuredly,’ cried out Crispin—‘you and all who teach what is opposed to God’s word.’

"‘A childish insult,’ said Luther as he mounted the car. One of the chamberlains here caught hold of his garments, and said: ‘Before you go away, master, a word with you on baptism, and the sacrament of the Eucharist.’

"‘Have you not my books?’ said the monk to him. ‘Read them.’

"‘I have read them, and my conscience is not satisfied with them;’ said the chamberlain.

"‘If any thing displeases you in them write against me;’ said Luther: and he started off.”†

---

\* See the whole discussion in Audin, p. 322, seqq.

† Ibid., 329.

Luther himself relates to us this adventure, and also gives to us the words of awful malediction with which the people greeted him, when he was leaving Orlamunde.\*

But the most interesting discussion of all, was that held at Marburg in 1528, on the subject of the holy Sacrament, between Luther, Melancthon, Justus Jonas, and Cruciger, on the one part; and Zuingle, Ecolampadius, Martin Bucer, and Gaspard Hedio, on the other. Luther contended for the real presence of the body and blood of Christ along with that of the bread and wine; and Zuinglius maintained a figurative presence, or rather, no presence at all. This point was the greatest subject of contention among the early reformers. "In 1527, Luther counted already no less than eight different interpretations of the text: 'THIS IS MY BODY!' Thirty years afterwards, there were no less than eighty-five!"† Rasperger, who wrote at a somewhat later period, reckoned no less than two hundred!‡ A pretty good commentary this, on the principle of private judgment. It must surely be a good rule of faith, since it has thus led to those *diversities*, which D'Aubigné admires so much, and deems essential developments of the Reformation.§

One of Zuingle's chief arguments against the real presence, was based on the fact that this doctrine was held by the Catholic Church. Luther answered: Wretched argument! Deny then the Scripture also; for we have received it too from the Pope. . . . . We must acknowledge that there are

---

\* Opp. tom. i, edit. Jenæ, fol. 467; edit. Witt. i, 214. Cf. Audin, p. 329. As he was leaving, the populace roared out after him: "May the devil and all his imps have you! May you break your neck and limbs before you leave the city!"

† See Audin, p. 408, note, for an account of the principal interpretations; most of them singular enough, even for those days of Bible mania.

‡ Apud Liebermann, Theologia Dogmat. De Eucharistia.

§ Bellarmine bears evidence that two hundred interpretations of the words:—this is my body—had been enumerated in a work published in 1577!—Controversiæ vol. iii, cap. viii, de Eucharist. p. 195. Edit. Venetiis, 1721—in 6 vols. folio.

great mysteries of faith in the Papacy; yea, all the truths we have inherited: for it is in popery that we found the true Scriptures, true baptism, the true sacrament of the altar, the true keys which remit sin, true preaching, the true catechism, which contains the Lord's prayer, the ten commandments—that is true Christianity.\*

Precious avowal, coming, as it does, from the father of the Reformation—the most inveterate enemy of Rome! How it contrasts with many of his other declarations? Why abandon the Catholic Church, if it taught all this, and held “true Christianity?” “Out of thy own mouth, I judge thee, thou wicked servant!” On another occasion, Luther had said: “Had Karlstadt or any other proved to me, five years ago, that there was nothing but bread and wine in the sacrament, he would have rendered me great service. It would have been a great blow to the Papacy: but it is all in vain; the text is too plain.”† It was perhaps too late: he had already taken his stand, and committed himself on the question.

The conference on this subject at Marburg, was long and violent: instead of healing, it only widened the breach among the reformers. We can furnish but one extract from the debate.

To prove the figurative presence, Zuingle had appealed to Ezechiel's wheel, and to the famous text from Exodus, chap. xii: “For it is the phase, that is, the passover of the Lord,”

\* Opp. Lutheri, Jenæ, fol. 408, 409. Audin, 410.

“Profecto frivolum est hoc argumentum, supra quod nihil boni edificaturi sumus. Hoc enim pacto negare eos oporteret totam quoque Scripturam Sacram et prædicandi officium; hoc enim totum a Papa habemus. Stultitia est hoc totum. . . . Nos autem fatemur sub Papatu plurimum esse boni Christiani, imo *omne bonum Christianum, atque etiam illinc ad nos devenisse*. Quippe fatemur in Papatu veram esse Scripturam Sacram, verum baptismum, verum sacramentum altaris, veras claves ad remissionem peccatorum, verum prædicandi officium; . . . Dico insuper in Papatu *veram Christianitatem esse, imo vero nucleum Christianitatis esse*.”

† Lutheri Opp. edit. Hall. tom. xv, p. 2448. Ad. Menzel, i, 269, 270.

which text had been suggested to him by the nocturnal visitor of whom "he could not say whether he was black or white!"\* Luther answered:

"The pasch and the wheel are allegorical. I do not mean to dispute with you about a word. If *is* means *signifies*, I appeal to the words of Christ, who says: "This is my body." The devil can not get out of them (*Da kann der Teufel nicht fur*). To doubt is to fall from the faith. Why do you not also see a trope in "he ascended into heaven?" A God made man, the Word made flesh, a God who suffers—these are all incomprehensible things, which you must however believe under penalty of eternal damnation.'

"Zuingle.—'You do not prove the matter. I will not permit you to incur the begging of the question. You must change your note (*Ihr werdet mir anderes singen*). Do you think that Christ wished to accommodate himself to the ignorant?'

"Luther.—'Do you then deny it? "This is a hard saying," muttered the Jews, who spoke of the thing as impossible. This passage can not serve you.

"Zuingle.—'Bah! it breaks your neck (*Nein, nein, bricht euch den Hals ab*).'

"Luther.—'Softly, be not so haughty: you are not in Switzerland, but in Hesse; and necks are not so easily broken here (*Die Halsae brechen nicht also*).'"†

The wavering, but often candid Melancthon wept bitterly over the dissensions of early Protestantism. He had not the power to heal the crying evil, nor the courage to abandon the system in which it originated. From many passages of his writings bearing on the subject, we select the following lament, in a confidential letter to a friend: "The Elbe with all its waves could not furnish tears enough to weep over the miseries of the distracted Reformation."‡

A learned German historian of the day, Dr Döllinger, has published an extensive work, replete with erudition, on the character of the German reformers, and the nature and tendency of the religious revolution which they brought about, as described by themselves.§ We had intended to draw

\* Florimond Remond, and Schlussenburg, in proem. Theolog. Calvin. Zuingle's own words have been already quoted.

† For an account of the entire discussion, taken from Rodolph Collip, an eye and ear-witness, see Audin, p. 413, seqq.

‡ Epist. lib. ii, Ep. 202.

§ The work was published at Ratisbon, in 1846-8, in three volumes, 8vo



copiously from its pages; but we luckily find the task already performed to our hands. The excellent condensed summary of its contents furnished by the *Dublin Review*\* suits exactly the scope of our present essays; and hence, in this and the following chapters, we shall quote Döllinger from this summary, under the appropriate heads. And here we present to our readers a view of the unsettledness of faith produced by the principle of private judgment, as certified by contemporary Protestant writers themselves:

"It is really painful to read the lamentations of the Protestant writers of those days, over the utter and inextricable confusion in which every doctrinal subject had been involved by the disputes and contentions of the rival religions. 'So great,' writes the learned Christopher Fischer, superintendent of Smalkald, 'are the corruptions, falsifications, and scandalous contentions, which, like a fearful deluge, overspread the land, and afflict, disturb, mislead, and perplex poor simple common men not deeply read in Scripture, that one is completely bewildered as to what side is right, and to which he should give his adhesion.' Bartholomew Meyer, professor of theology at Marburg, declares that the 'last times,' predicted by the Lord and his apostles, have arrived, and that 'not only in morals, but also in the doctrine of the church, there is such confusion, that it may be doubted whether there is a believer on earth.' An equally unimpeachable witness of the same period admits, that 'so great, on the part of most people, is the contempt of religion, the neglect of piety, and the trampling down of virtue, that they would seem not to be Christians, nothing but downright savage barbarians.' Flacius Illyricus declares, that 'the falsification of the doctrine of penance and justification had led to complete epicurianism.' Klopfer, the parish minister of Bolheim, in Wurtemberg, (1566) complains, that 'the greater number among them hold all that God has revealed in the Scripture, to be silly and idle things, old-world fables and tales.' Ratzenberger, an old friend and fellow-laborer of Luther, had long before complained that 'all true doctrine and religion was utterly extinguished in Germany;' and the celebrated Selnecker was so impressed with a sense of the hopelessness of the evil, that he declared that many pious hearts gave up in despair:—'I advised that things should be left to themselves, that it was not possible to change them, so completely had this spirit got the upperhand almost throughout Christendom.' "

---

\* Number for September, 1848. The writer furnishes references for each quotation, which we omit.

Such then were the "diversities" of early Protestantism! Such its endless maze of inconsistencies, contradictions, and absurdities! Such the bitter fruits of that tree of revolt which Luther planted in the centre of Germany: and which was watered by the blood of the slaughtered Anabaptists, of the hundred thousand men who fell in the war of the peasants, and of the countless multitudes, who perished in the thirty years' war! Such was the influence of the Reformation on the doctrines of Christianity! It found but one faith on the earth; and it created a hundred new ones, all contradicting one another! Before it came, mankind were of "one tongue and of one speech;" after it had done its deadly work, there was a confusion of tongues on the earth, and men no longer understood each other. Does not St. Paul draw a lively picture of early, and even of modern Protestantism, when he speaks of those who are like "children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, in the wickedness of men, in craftiness, in which they lie in wait to deceive?"\* Could a system which thus divided and unsettled faith—which produced all these disastrous results, be approved by heaven?

Let it not be said, that the Reformation did not produce all these bitter consequences. It is fairly responsible for them all. No effect ever followed more necessarily or more immediately from any cause, than these divisions followed from their first great, and their only cause, private judgment as the only rule of faith. This principle is responsible for still more evil results: it has led, by gradual, but by certain steps, to infidelity. History does not tell us of any at least considerable body of men, who made an open profession of infidel principles, in Christian countries, during the first fifteen ages of the Church. But now, what is the state of that portion of the world, which on the continent of Europe professes Protestant Christianity? Infidelity is the order of the day

---

\* Ephesians, iv : 14.

both in Germany and in Switzerland; the two fatherlands of Protestantism. It is unnecessary to multiply proof on a matter so unquestionable. Even D'Aubigné virtually admits, that the majority of Protestants have there passed over to the standard of rationalism, or the religion of men\*—that is, to rank deism. And even where Protestantism still subsists, what is it, but a lifeless tree, the withered branches of which are stirred only by the breath of its own internal dissensions?

We will conclude this Chapter with the picture of Protestantism in modern Germany, drawn by the master-hand of Frederick Von Schlegel, whose mighty mind, disgusted with the endless mazes of Protestantism, sought refuge within the pale of Catholic unity. He is speaking of the boasted biblical learning of Germany, in which he says "the true key of interpretation, which sacred tradition alone can furnish, was irretrievably lost, as the sequel has but too well proved!" He then adds:

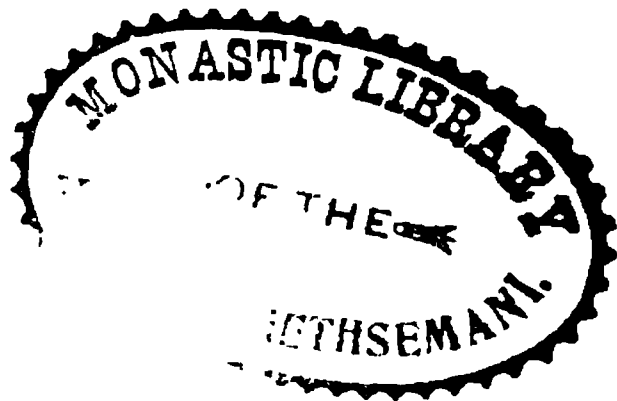
"This is nowhere so fully understood, and so deeply felt as in Protestant Germany of the present day, Germany, where lies the root of Protestantism, its mighty center, its all-ruling spirit, and its life-blood, Germany, where, to supply the want of the true spirit of religion, a remedy is sought sometimes in the external forms of liturgy,† sometimes in the pompous apparatus of biblical philology and research, destitute of the true key of interpretation; sometimes in the empty philosophy of rationalism, and sometimes in the mazes of a mere interior pietism."‡

---

\* D'Aubigné, preface to vol. i, p. 9.

† He here refers to the ordinances promulgated some years ago by the king of Prussia, for the reform of the Liturgy (Protestant).

‡ Philosophy of History, vol. ii, p. 207.



## CHAPTER IX.

## INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON MORALS.

"This world is fallen on an easier way;  
This age knows better than to fast and pray."—DRYDEN.

Two methods of investigation—Connection of doctrine and morals—Salutary influence of Catholic doctrines—Of confession—Objections answered—Of celibacy—Its manifold advantages—Utility of the doctrines of satisfaction and indulgences—Of fasting—Of prayers for the dead—Of communion of saints—Sanctity of marriage—Divorces—Influence of Protestant doctrines—Shocking disorders—Testimony of Erasmus—Bigamy and polygamy—Mohammedanism—Practical results—Testimonies of Luther, Bucer, Calvin, and Melancthon—The reformers testifying on their own work—Döllinger's researches—Character of Erasmus—John Reuchlin—Present state of morals in Protestant countries.

WE have seen what was the influence of the Reformation on the doctrines of Christianity. We will now briefly examine its influence on morals. Was this beneficial or was it injurious? There are two ways to decide this question: the one by reasoning a priori on the nature and tendency of the respective doctrines of Catholicism and of Protestantism; the other, which will greatly confirm the conclusions of the former by facts showing what was the relative practical influence of both systems. We will employ both these methods of investigation.

I. Doctrines have a powerful influence on morals. The former enlighten the understanding, the latter guide and direct the movements of the heart and will. These are of themselves mere blind impulses, until light is reflected on them from the understanding. A sound faith, then, illuminating the intellect, is an essential pre-requisite to sound morals guiding the heart, in the individual as well as in society. True, we are able, by the exercise of our free will, to shut our eyes to the light, and to continue acting perversely; but this does not disprove the powerful influence, which the understanding, enlightened by faith, has over our moral conduct.

What was the necessary moral influence of those doctrines of the Catholic Church, which the Reformation rejected ; and what that of those new ones which it substituted in the place of the old ? We speak only, of course, of the distinctive doctrines of the two communions, not of the common ground which they occupy. The Reformation retained many of the great principles of Christianity, which, according to the testimony of Luther himself, referred to above, it had borrowed from the Catholic Church. Among the doctrines, or important points of discipline which the reformers repudiated, the principal were : confession ; the celibacy of the clergy ; the doctrine of satisfaction, implied in fasting, purgatory, prayers for the dead, and indulgences ; the honor and invocation of saints ; and the indissoluble sanctity of marriage ; to say nothing of the real presence, which the greater portion of Protestants also rejected. We will say a few words on the moral influence of each of these doctrines. We may remark of them all, in general, that they had a restraining as well as an elevating effect ; that many of them were painful to human nature, and opposed a strong barrier to the passions.

Even Voltaire admitted the salutary moral influence of confession. He says : " The enemies of the Catholic Church, who opposed an institution so salutary, seem to have taken away from men the greatest possible check to secret offenses."\* Another infidel, and a mortal enemy of Rome—

---

\* *Annales de l'Empire*, quoted by Robelot, in his work entitled : *Influence de la Reformation de Luther, sur la croyance religieuse, la politique, et le progres des lumieres*. Par M. Robelot, ancien chanoine de l'Eglise cathedrale de Dijon. A Lyon. 1822. 1 vol. 8vo, pp. 440. (Influence of the Reformation of Luther on religious belief, on politics, and on the progress of enlightenment. By M. Robelot.)

This work was written in reply to the Essay on the Reformation which had been published by M. Villers, and had been rewarded with a prize by the infidel French Institute. Of this essay an unexceptionable witness, Hallam, writes as follows : " The essay on the Influence of the Reformation by Villers, which obtained a prize from the French Institute, and has been extolled by a very friendly but better informed writer in the *Biographie Univer-*

Marmontel — says: "How salutary a preservative for the morals of youth, is the practice and obligation of going to confession every month? The shame attending this humble avowal of the most hidden sins, prevents perhaps the commission of more of them, than all other motives the most holy taken together."\* Nothing but stern truth could have drawn such avowals from such men.

How many crimes, in fact, has not the practice of confession prevented or corrected! How much implacable hatred has it not appeased! How much restitution of ill-gotten goods, and how much reparation of injured character, has it not brought about! How often has it not preserved giddy youth from confirmed habits of secret and degrading vice! How much consolation has it not poured into bosoms torn by anguish, or weighed down by sorrow! What amount of good and salutary advice has it not imparted! How often has it not prevented the sinner from being driven to the very verge of despair! In a word, how much has it not contributed to the preservation of morals in every portion of society, which felt its influence!

Tell us not, that confession may be abused by corrupt men, that it has been often made an instrument of unholy ambition in the hands of the priesthood, and that it facilitates the commission of crime, by its offer of pardon. These objec-

---

selle, appears to me the work of a man who had not taken the pains to read any one contemporary work, or even any compilation which contains many extracts. No wonder that it does not represent, in the slightest degree, the real spirit of the times, or the tenets of the reformers. Thus, *ex. gr.*, 'Luther,' he says, 'exposed the abuse of the traffic of indulgences, and the danger of believing that heaven and the remission of all crimes could be bought with money; while a sincere repentance and an amended life were the only means of appeasing divine justice.' (Page 65, English translation.) This at least is not very like Luther's antinomian contempt for repentance and amendment of life; it might come near to the notions of Erasmus."—Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. In 2 vols. 8vo. Harper & Brothers; New York, 1841. Vol. i, p. 166, note.

\* "Mémoires," tom. i, liv. i. Apud Robelot, *ibid.*

tions are all based on unfounded suspicion, or on gross misapprehension of the nature of confession. At least, the evils complained of are very greatly exaggerated, and are not to be put in comparison with the incalculable amount of good which this institution is calculated to effect, and which it has really accomplished. What good thing is there, which has not been abused? Has not the Bible itself, abused by wicked men, been a source of incalculable mischief? And has not the Church guarded against abuses in the confessional, by the sternest enactments? One of these takes from the wicked priest all power of absolving an accomplice in crime; and another requires the penitent to denounce the unfaithful minister to the proper authorities.\*

And then, how sacred and inviolable has not the seal of confession ever been? History does not record a single instance of its violation, among hundreds of thousands of priests, in the long lapse of ages!† How can the priest avail himself of the knowledge obtained through confession, in order to exercise political or any other undue influence, when he is bound by the most sacred obligation, sanctioned by the most severe penalties, to make *no use whatever* of the knowledge thus acquired, outside of the confessional itself? Why reason from mere idle suppositions and mere vague possibilities, against the strongest evidences, and the most stubborn facts?

As to the other objection—that confession encourages the commission of sin—it is as puerile, as it is hackneyed. Absurdity is stamped on its very face. What? is it easier then to commit a sin which you know you have to confess to a fellow man, than it would be to commit the same sin, without feeling any such obligation? We would not be guilty of an

---

\* See the two bulls of Benedict XIV. on this subject. They begin *Sacramentum* and *Apostolici*. Another enactment to the same effect was made by Pope Gregory XV., in the year 1622. See Liguori—" *Homo Apostolicus*." Tract. xvi, numo. 95, seqq. and numo. 165, seqq. De complice et sollicit.

† See the testimony of Marmontel to this effect. *Mémoires*, tom. iv.

offence, forsooth, which we believed, at the time, we could expiate by a mere act of internal repentance, joined with confession to God; and yet we would be encouraged to commit this same offence, if we felt that, in addition to all this, we would be obliged to confess it to a priest! The objection is predicated on a strange ignorance of human nature. The Catholic Church requires, for the remission of sin, all that Protestants demand; and, over and above all this, it requires, as essential conditions to pardon, many very painful things—confession, restitution, works of penitential satisfaction—which Protestants do not require. Which system really encourages the commission of sin?

The people never could be induced to confess their sins to a married clergy. From the testimony of Burkard, Bishop of Worms, it appears that the Catholic population of that city refused to go to confession to those priests, who, stimulated by the principles of the Reformation then just commencing, had broken their vows of celibacy by taking wives. Confession and celibacy fell together. A married clergy never can command the respect, which has ever been paid to those who are unmarried. This is generally admitted by Protestants themselves, and it is even made a matter of censure against the Catholic clergy, who are accused of having too much influence over their flocks! The true secret of this influence lies in the greater abstraction from the world, in the greater freedom from worldly solicitude, and in the more spiritual character of an unmarried clergy. Does not St. Paul allege these very motives, in the strong appeal which he makes in favor of celibacy, in his first epistle to the Corinthians? Does he not advise the embracing of this state, both by word and by his own example? Can the Catholic Church be blamed for having adopted his principles, and acted on his advice, in the matter of the celibacy of her clergy?

Who can recount the immense advantages of priestly celi-

---

\* Chapter vii. Read the whole chapter.



bacy to society? Who can tell of all the splendid churches it has erected; of the hospitals for the sick and the afflicted, it has reared; of the colleges it has built; of the ignorant it has instructed; of the noble examples of heroic charity it has given to the world; and of the pagan nations it has converted to Christianity? Catholic Europe is full of noble monuments to religion, to literature and to charity, which an unmarried priesthood has built up; and which a married clergy, "solicitous for the things of the world, how they might please their wives," and support their children, would certainly never have erected?

To advert briefly to the last consideration named above; can a married clergy, other things being equal, cope with one that is unmarried, in missionary labors among heathen nations? With the incumbrance of their wives and children, can the former be as free in their movements, or be as zealous and disinterested; can they mingle as freely with the people, labor as much, or succeed as well, in any respect as the latter? What say the annals of Protestant missionary enterprise on this very subject? Can they point to *one* single nation or people converted to Christianity by their married preachers, notwithstanding the immense outlay of money for this purpose, and all the parade that is made about carrying the gospel to the heathen? True, there are other weighty causes, which have also greatly contributed to this signal failure of Protestant missions; but the absence of celibacy in their missionaries is no doubt one of the chief causes.

The doctrine of satisfaction was another strong Catholic barrier against vice, which the Reformation removed. The reformers could not appreciate the utility of fasting, of vigils, and of other works of penance, undertaken for the expiation of sin. They had abolished the great sacrifice of the new law; and they wished also to abolish all those painful observances, which could nourish and keep alive in the soul of the Christian that *spirit* of sacrifice, which might incline him "to deny himself, to take up his cross and to follow Christ." Both

kinds of sacrifice were intimately connected; and they both fell together. The reformers no longer taught their disciples, after the example of St. Paul, "to chastise their bodies and bring them into subjection," or "to fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in their flesh."\*

And yet, besides aiding in expiating sin, and rendering Christians more conformable to the image of the Saviour and of St. Paul, this doctrine was fraught with other almost incalculable advantages to society. To expiate their sins, Catholics of the olden time not only "chastised their bodies," but they also bestowed abundant alms, and reared splendid institutions of learning and of charity. Many of the colleges and hospitals of Europe owe their erection to the operation of this principle. It is quite common to find in the testamentary dispositions of the pious founders of these noble institutions, this consideration expressed in such clauses as this: "For the expiation of my sins, I found this hospital or college."

We have seen that St. Peter's church and the university of Wittenberg were both indebted for their erection mainly to indulgences, which were predicated on the necessity of satisfaction for sin. These are two instances, out of hundreds which might be stated, to show the beneficial influence of this doctrine on society.† Alas! Charity hath grown cold, in those places particularly where this principle hath ceased to exist! Private interest, a fever for speculation, selfish and sordid avarice, have dried up those deep fountains of Catholic charity, which in the good old Catholic times so abundantly irrigated and fertilized the garden Catholic!

How manifold also are the advantages of holy fasting! How it elevates the mind,‡ fosters temperance, teaches us to

\* Colossians, i: 24; and 1 Corinthians, ix.

† See "The Ages of Faith" by Kenelm Digby, which is full of such examples.

‡ *Vitia comprimunt, mentem elevat, virtutem largitur et præmia*—*Præf. ad Missa.*

restrain the passions, and to subdue the rebellious flesh? "Like another spring," according to the beautiful comparison of St. John Chrysostom,\* "it renews the spirit, and brings calm and joy to the soul." It also promotes health, and conduces to longevity. Who has not remarked the great age to which the anchorites of the desert attained? Malte Brun informs us, that of one hundred and fifty-two anchorites, who lived in different climates, and in different centuries, the average age was seventy-six years.† By accustoming us to endure privation, fasting teaches us to bear patiently the necessary ills of life, and disposes us for great enterprises. In fact it is remarkable, that Moses and Elias approached the Deity to receive his special communications, only after the preliminary disposition of long fasting: and that Christ himself "fasted forty days and forty nights," ere he entered on his divine mission of mercy.

How soothing, too, to the soul, is that sweet communion with the departed, which is kept up by the Catholic practice of praying for the dead? Even the stern Doctor Johnson felt the beauty and the force of this sympathy: he not only defended the practice, but he seems to have occasionally adopted it himself. He was not satisfied with merely dropping a tear, warm from his heart, over the grave of his departed mother; but he, at the same time, wafted a fervent prayer to heaven for her repose.‡

And how elevating and useful; on the other hand, is that constant communion with heaven, which is kept up by the invocation of saints! It powerfully stimulates us, not only to admire their super-eminent glory and to implore their aid; but also to imitate their virtues. The Offices of the Church keep up a constant round of anniversary celebrations of the virtues and triumphs of these heroes of Christianity; whose virtues are thus always kept fresh in the minds of the faith-

\* St. John Chrysostom—"De excellentia Jejun." Opp. T. ii.

† "Précis de la Géographie," ii, 44.

‡ See Boswell's Life of Johnson.

ful, who are by this means powerfully excited to follow their example. Who does not perceive the highly beneficial influence of this practice on the tone and morals of society?

On the subject of marriage, the Catholic Church has never swerved in the least from the stern line of duty. She has ever defended its sanctity, and maintained its indissolubility. Many of her struggles with princes during the middle ages, were undertaken by her for the vindication of these sacred principles lying at the basis of the matrimonial contract, the well-spring of society. England was lost to the Church, because the unwavering firmness of the Pope would not permit Henry VIII. to repudiate a virtuous wife, and to wed another more to his royal taste. She has won imperishable honors in this battle field of conjugal unity and purity against lawless vice in high places, on which she has nobly and victoriously contended with the army of the passions.

On this point, as we have seen, the reformers were very far from being so stern or unyielding. They not only allowed two wives to the landgrave of Hesse, but they permitted divorce for trivial causes; and some of them even openly sanctioned polygamy, after the example of the patriarchs. What were the sad effects of their teaching on this subject, we shall see more fully in the sequel. It will suffice here to remark on one obvious result of this laxity of doctrine, in regard to the sacredness and permanency of the marriage contract. Before the Reformation, divorces were almost unheard of; great princes sometimes applied for them, but met with determined resistance and a stern rebuke, on the part of the Church. Even at present, in Catholic countries, they are almost unknown. Is it so in those communities where the influence of the Reformation has been long or extensively felt? Alas! in these, men seem almost wholly to have lost sight of the divine injunction: "What God has united, let not man put asunder."\* Divorces have multiplied to a frightful extent. In

---

\* St. Matthew, xix : 6.

the United States, our legislatures and courts receive annually thousands of petitions for divorce: and what is more deplorable, they usually grant the prayer of the petitioners!\* Is not this a lamentable evil, most injurious to society? Whence does it originate, if not in the weakening of Catholic principles in regard to the indissolubility of the marriage contract, by the counter principles broached at the period of the Reformation?

A volume might be written on the salutary influence on society of those distinctive doctrines of the Church which Protestants have rejected.† But our limits permitted only the above rapid and imperfect sketch: and we must now pass on to the additional inquiry; what was the moral influence of those new doctrines which the Reformation introduced? We have already seen what many of these doctrines were, and we have already been enabled to estimate, in a great measure, their probable effect on the morals of society. But we will here give some further details on a subject so interesting and important.

Luther's famous, or rather *infamous* sermon on marriage, preached in the public church of Wittenberg in 1522, in the plain vernacular language, gave great scandal, and was a source of incalculable moral evil throughout Germany. It openly pandered to the basest passions of human nature. It was busily circulated and greedily devoured by all classes, especially among those who were favorable to the Reformation. Never was there a grosser specimen of unblushing lubricity: and its having been so much relished by the partisans of Luther, is a certain index of a very low standard of morality at that period. But this was not the only specimen of decency given by the "father of the Reformation." Many

---

\* The chancery court of Louisville granted sixty divorces in a single year! And in many other places the case is still worse; as, for instance, in Indiana.

† Those who may wish to see more on this subject, are referred to Scotti—*Teoremi di Politica Christiana*—an excellent Italian work, in 2 vols. 8vo.

of his letters to his private friends are much too obscene to be exhibited, even in the original Latin. Yet they had a powerful effect on the morals of the age. Luther openly invited the Catholic priests, monks, and nuns, who had vowed celibacy, to break their vows, which he styled the "bonds of anti-christ." His soul overflowed with joy at the news of each new sacrilegious marriage. He would congratulate the infringer of his vows, "on his having overcome an impure and damnable celibacy," by entering into marriage, which he painted as "a paradise even in the midst of poverty."\* He wrote a work against celibacy and monastic vows, teeming with the strongest appeals to the lowest and basest passions. He openly urged princes to expel by force the religious from their monasteries.†

Erasmus, an eye witness, paints the horrible disorders to which Luther's epistles, sermons and works against celibacy, naturally led. He represents certain cities of Germany as swarming with apostate monks, who drank beer to excess, danced and sang in the public streets, and gave in to all manner of scandalous excesses. He says of them: "That if they could get enough to eat and *a wife*, they cared not a straw for any thing else."‡ "When they found not wives among the female religious, they sought them in the haunts of vice. What cared they for the priestly benediction? They married each other, and celebrated their nuptials by orgies, in which the new married couple generally lost their reason."§

"Formerly" continues Erasmus, "men quitted their wives for the sake of the gospel; nowadays, the gospel flourishes most, when a few succeed in marrying wives with rich dow-

\* "Paradisum arbitror conjugium, vel summâ inopiâ laborans." Epist. Nicholao Gerbellis, Nov. 1, 1521.

† See his words quoted by Audin, p. 335, seqq.

‡ "Amant viaticum et uxorem : cœtera pili non faciunt." Erasmi Epist. p. 637.

§ Audin p. 336, who quotes from Erasmus—loco citato.

ries.”\* He caustically remarks, “that Ecolampadius had lately married a beautiful young girl, he suspects, to mortify his flesh.”† He also informs us, that these ex-monks, after having become the most zealous partisans of the Reformation, subsisted by open robbery of the churches and their neighbors, indulged to excess in drinking and in games of hazard, and presented a spectacle of the most revolting licentiousness.‡

Luther had taught that “as in the first days of Christianity, the Church was forced to exalt virginity among the pagans, who honored adultery; so, now, when the Lord had made the light of the gospel (!) shine forth, it was necessary to exalt marriage, at the expense of popish celibacy.”§ The apostate monks eagerly seized on this and similar teachings of the reformer; and the above are some of the disorders which naturally ensued. But even they are not the worst. Bigamy was quite common among them, at least for a time. They defended it, too, on scriptural grounds. Luther was appealed to on the subject. In his reply, he wavers and hesitates, wishes each individual to be left to the guidance of his own conscience, and concludes his letter in these remarkable words :

“For my part I candidly confess, that I could not prohibit any one, who might wish it, to take many wives at once, nor is this repugnant to the Holy Scriptures. But there are things lawful, which are not expedient. Bigamy is of the number.”||

Karlstadt went still further: he wished to make polygamy *obligatory*, or at least entirely permissible to all. He said to Luther: “As neither you, nor I, have found a text in the sacred books against bigamy, let us be bigamists and trigamists—let us take as many wives as we can maintain. ‘Increase and multiply.’—Do you understand? Accomplish the

---

\* “Nunc floret evangelium, si pauci ducant uxores bene dotatas.”—Erasmus Epist. p. 768.

† Ibid., p. 632.

‡ Ibid., p. 766.

§ Luther Opp. tom i, p. 526, seqq.

|| Epist. ad K. Bruck 13, Janu. 1524. “Ego sane fateor me non posse prohibere si quis velit plures ducere uxores, nec repugnat Sacris literis ?”

order of heaven."\* This argument must have had great weight with Luther, as he had maintained that celibacy was impossible, and had himself alleged that very text from Genesis, to prove that marriage was a divine command obligatory on all! By the way, as Luther married only at the age of forty-two, what are we to think of the purity of his previous life, when he openly maintained such principles as these? They were well calculated, at any rate, to bring down the lofty standard of Christian morality to that of Moham-medanism: and, if they did not bring about this result, we certainly owe no thanks to the Reformation. How strongly these loose principles of morality contrast with the stern teachings of the Catholic Church on marriage!

II. It was natural to expect, that the influence of such principles as these, as well as of those other distinctive doctrines of the Reformation which we have already referred to,† should have been most injurious to public morals. And accordingly we find, from the testimony of the reformers themselves, and of their earliest partisans, that such precisely was the case. Luther himself assures us of this deterioration in public morals:

"The world grows worse and worse, and becomes more wicked every day. Men are now more given to revenge, more avaricious, more devoid of mercy, less modest, and more incorrigible; in fine, more wicked than in the Papacy."‡—In another place he says, speaking to his most intimate friends: "One thing no less astonishing than scandalous, is to see that, since the pure doctrine of the gospel has been brought to light(!), the world daily goes from bad to worse."§

This is not at all astonishing, when we consider the nature and necessary tendency of that "pure doctrine."

He draws the following dreadful picture of the morals of his time, after "the pure doctrine had been brought to light:"

"The noblemen and the peasants have come to such a pitch, that they

\* Apud Audin, p. 339.

† Supra, Chapter iii.

‡ Luther in Postillâ sup. 1 Dom. Adventus.

§ Idem, Table Talk, fol. 55.



boast and proclaim without scruple, that they have only to let themselves be preached at; but that they would prefer being entirely disenthralled from the word of God: and that they would not give a farthing for all our sermons put together. And how are we to lay this to them as a crime, when they make no account of the world to come? They live as they believe: they are and continue to be swine: they live like swine and they die like real swine.”\*

Aurifaber, the disciple and bosom friend of Luther, and the publisher of his Table Talk, tells us: “Luther was wont to say, that after the revelation of his gospel, virtue had become extinct, justice oppressed, temperance bound with cords, virtue torn in pieces by the dogs, faith had become wavering, and devotion had been lost.”† So notoriously immoral, in fact, were the early Lutherans, that it was then a common saying in Germany, to express a day spent in drinking and debauch: “Hodie Lutheranice vivemus”—“To-day we will live like Lutherans.”‡

In another place, Luthier laments the moral evils of the Reformation, in the following characteristic strain:

“I would not be astonished if God should open at length the gates and windows of hell, and snow or hail down (up?) devils, or rain down on our heads fire and brimstone, or bury us in a fiery abyss, as he did Sodom and Gomorrha. Had Sodom and Gomorrha received the gifts which have been granted to us—had they seen our visions and heard our instructions—they would yet be standing. They were a thousand times less culpable than Germany, for they had not heard the word of God from their preachers. And we who have received and heard it—we do nothing but rise up against God. . . . Since the downfall of popery, and the cessation of its excommunications and spiritual penalties, the people have learned to despise the word of God. They care no longer for the churches; they have ceased to fear and to honor God.”§

Martin Bucer, another of the reformers, bears the following explicit testimony on the same subject:

\* Table Talk, super i, Epist. Corinth., chap. xv.

† Aurifaber, fol. 623; and Florimond Remond, p. 225.

‡ Bened. Morgenstern—*Traité de l'Eglise*, p. 221.

§ Luther Wercke Edit. Altenburg, tome iii, p. 519. Reinhard's ‘*Reformations Predigten*,’ tom. iii, p. 445.

"The greater part of the people seem to have embraced the gospel(!), only in order to shake off the yoke of discipline, and the obligation of fasting, penances, etc., which lay upon them in the time of popery, and to live at their pleasure, enjoying their lust and lawless appetite without control. They therefore lend a willing ear to the doctrine that we are justified by faith alone, and not by good works, having no relish for them."\*

The reformers ought surely to have known better probably than any one else what was the real tendency of the new gospel, and they certainly had no motive to exaggerate its evil results.

John Calvin draws a picture, not much more flattering of the state of morals to his branch of the glorious Reformation. He states that even the preachers of the new doctrines were notoriously immoral:

"There remains still a wound more deplorable. The pastors, yes the pastors themselves who mount the pulpit . . . . are at the present time the most shameful examples of waywardness and other vices. Hence their sermons obtain neither more credit nor authority than the fictitious tales uttered on the stage by the strolling player. . . . I am astonished that the women and children do not cover them with mud and filth."†

Another leading reformer—Philip Melancthon— informs us, that those who had joined the standard of the Reformation at his day, "had come to such a pitch of barbarity, that many of them were persuaded that if they fasted one day, they would find themselves dead the night following."‡ And still another early Protestant, Jacob Andreas, says: "It is certain that God wishes and requires of his servants a grave and Christian discipline; but it passes with us as a new Papacy, and a new monkery."§—And no wonder, after all the teaching on the subject of Luther and the other leading reformers!

We here subjoin an analysis of the testimony furnished by the reformers themselves, according to the learned and accurate Döllinger, on the practical moral results of their teachings, as witnessed by themselves in their own times.

\* "De regno Christi."

† In vi, cap. Mathei

‡ Livre—sur les scandales—p. 128.

§ Comment. in St. Lucam. Chap. xxi.

If some of these testimonies are similar to those already given, the confirmation is still more forcible. As will be seen, the analysis is sufficiently thorough and searching, and its length will be pardoned to the great interest of the subject.\*

#### THE MORAL RESULTS OF THE REFORMATION.

"Upon this head, few will be disposed to call in question the authority of our first evidence, the father of the Reformation himself. With all his partiality for the child of his own labors, Luther is forced to admit, that it were no wonder if his beloved Germany 'were sunk in the earth, or utterly overthrown by the Turks and Tartars, by reason of the hellish and damnable forgetfulness and contempt of God's grace which the people manifest; nay, that the wonder is, that the earth does not refuse to bear them, and the sun to shine upon them any longer.' He doubts 'whether it should any longer be called a world, and not rather an abyss of all evils, wherewith those sodomites afflict his soul and his eyes both day and night.' 'Every thing is reversed,' he laments, 'the world grows every day the worse for this teaching; and the misery of it is, that *men are nowadays more covetous, more hard-hearted, more corrupt, more licentious, and more wicked, than of old under the Papacy.*' 'Our evangelicals,' he avows, 'are now sevenfold more wicked than they were before. In proportion as we hear the gospel, we steal, lie, cheat, gorge, swill, and commit every crime. If one devil has been driven out of us, seven worse ones have taken their place, to judge from the conduct of princes, lords, nobles, burgesses, and peasants, their utterly shameless acts, and their disregard of God and of his menaces.' 'Under the Papacy, men were charitable and gave freely; but now, under the gospel, all almsgiving is at an end, every one fleeces his neighbor, and each seeks to have all for himself. And the longer the gospel is preached, the deeper do men sink in avarice, pride, and ostentation.' So utterly, too, does he despair of the improvement of this generation of his disciples, that he 'often wishes that *these filthy swine-bellies were back again under the tyranny of the Pope*, for it is impossible that a race so savage, such a "people of Gomorrha," could be ruled by the peaceful consolations of the gospel.'

"It could hardly be expected, indeed, that Luther would himself attribute the universal depravity, the presence of which he thus frankly acknowledges, to the influence of his own gospel. But he can not, and does not conceal,

---

\* We take this excellent summary from the Dublin Review for September, 1848, which gives also the proper references to Döllinger's German work.

that such was the popular impression regarding it; and although, of course, he denounces the imputation as sinful and blasphemous, he admits that men 'loudly and complainingly *attributed it all to the gospel, or, as they call it, the new learning,*' and tauntingly demanded what was the good of all their fine preaching and instruction, if no one followed it, or was the better for it, nay rather, if they grew worse than they were before; 'it would be better,' they said, 'if things had remained as they were.' Indeed, not to multiply evidence of a fact so notorious, he himself acknowledges that 'the peasants, through the influence of the gospel, have become utterly beyond restraint, and think they may do what they please. They no longer fear either hell or purgatory, but content themselves with saying, "I believe, therefore I shall be saved:" and they become proud, stiff-necked Mammonists, and accursed misers, sucking the very substance of the country and the people.'

"These are but a few out of a host of similar avowals, which Dr. Döllinger has collected from every portion of Luther's works. Lest it should be supposed they are confined to the earlier years of the Reformation, and regard only the state of the Lutheran body in the first phases of its formation, we shall venture, even at the risk of being tedious, to select a few passages, written during the last years of his life, not a whit less expressive than those already produced. During the years 1540-6, Lutheranism may be truly said to have reached its culminating point, as far as regards the career of its founder: In a letter of his written to Hermann Bonn, (April 5, 1543,) he expresses his exultation at the completeness of his success—'From Riga to Metz—from the foot of the Alps to the north point of the peninsula of Jutland'—his realm had been gradually extended. The number of crowned heads and of sovereign princes now in his following, was very great, and later years had notably increased the catalogue. Duke Otho, Henry, elector palatine of the Rhine, the duchess of Calenberg, Archbishop Hermann of Cologne, and the bishop of Münster and Osnabruck, were among his most recent adherents. Wolfenbüttel had just been added to the ranks by the ministry of Bugenhagen. The nobility and many of the lower classes in Austria, had begun to feel the contagion. The great body of the German nobility were, at least indirectly, favorers of the movement. Many of the noble chapters had passed over *en masse*, and others were but tottering in their allegiance. The imperial cities were for the most part Protestant; and it seemed but a question of time to complete and perpetuate the conquest thus rapidly and systematically achieved!

"Such was the exterior history of the movement; such was the external condition of the Lutheran communion during the later years of its founder's life. But how hollow the triumph, and how unsubstantial the conquest which had been thus obtained!

"On Nov. 10th, 1541, Luther writes to one of his friends, that 'he had

almost abandoned all hope for Germany, so universally had avarice, usury, tyranny, disunion, and the whole host of untruth, wickedness, and treachery, as well as disregard of the word of God, and the most unheard of ingratitude, taken possession of the nobility, the courts, the towns, and the villages' In the March of the following year, he writes in much the same strain, adding, that 'his only hope is in the near approach of the last day;—the world has become so barbarous, so tired of the word of God, and entertains so thorough a disgust for it.' On the 23d of July, he declares, that 'those who would be followers of the gospel, draw down God's wrath by their avarice, their rapine, their plunder of the churches; while the people listen to instructions, prayers, and entreaties, but continue, nevertheless, to heap sin upon sin.' On another occasion, (October 25th, 1542,) he declares that 'he is tired of living in this hideous Sodom;' that 'all the good which he had hoped to effect has vanished away; that there remains naught but a deluge of sin and unholiness, and nothing is left for him but to pray for his discharge.' And in reality, not only did he wish for death as a boon to himself, 'that he might be released from this Satanical generation,' but he was even able calmly to see his little daughter Margaret, to whom he was devotedly attached, die before his eyes. 'Alas!' he cried to the prince of Anhalt, 'we live in Babylon and Sodom. Every thing is growing worse each day.' And even in the very last hours of his life, so bitterly did he feel the immorality and irreligiousness of the city which he had made the chosen seat and center of his doctrines, that he had actually made up his mind to leave it forever. So sensible was he made of the connection between his doctrines and the moral condition of Wittenberg, that the thought of residence there became insupportable. 'Let us but fly from this Sodom!' he wrote to his wife a few months before his death; 'I will wander through the world, and beg my bread from door to door, rather than embitter and disturb my poor old last days by this spectacle of the disorder of Wittenberg, and the fruitlessness of my bitter dear toil in its service.' It is a significant commentary on the fruitlessness of the mission to which he had devoted his life, that it needed all the influence of the elector to induce him to abandon his determination!

"Such is a faint outline of Luther's own report of the moral fruits of his Reformation. It is but too well borne out in its worst details by his friends and fellow-laborers. The reader will perceive that we are drawing but lightly upon Dr. Döllinger's abundant and overflowing pages; and for what remains, we must be even more sparing in our extracts. We shall only observe that those which we mean to present are taken almost at random; that it would have been easy to find hundreds of others equally striking; and that the effect of all is grievously impaired by the broken and fragmentary form, in which, of course, they must appear in such a notice as the present.

"Few of the reformers dealt less in extremes than 'the mild Melancthon.' What, therefore, are we to think of the state of things which drew even from him the declaration, that 'in these latter times the world has taken to itself a boundless license; that very many are so unbridled as to *throw off every bond of discipline, though at the same time they pretend that they have faith*, that they invoke God with true fervor of heart, and that they are lively and elect members of the church; living, meanwhile, in truly cyclopean indifference and barbarism, and in slavish subjection to the devil, who drives them to adulteries, murders, and other atrocious crimes?' This class, too, he tells us, are firmly wedded to their own opinions, and entirely intolerant of remonstrance. 'Men receive with avidity the inflammatory harangues which exaggerate liberty and give loose rein to the passions; as, for an example, the cynical, rather than Christian principle, which denies the necessity of good works. Posterity will stand amazed that a generation should have ever existed, in which these ravings have been received with applause.' 'Never in the days of our fathers,' he avows, 'had there existed such gluttony as exists now, and is daily on the increase.' 'The morals of the people, all that they do, and all that they neglect to do, are becoming every day worse. Gluttony, debauchery, licentiousness, wantonness, are gaining the upper hand more and more among the people, and in one word, every one does just as he pleases.'

"'Most of the preachers,' writes Bucer, 'imagine, that if they inveigh stoutly against the anti-christians [papists], and chatter away on a few unimportant fruitless questions, and then assail their brethren also, they have discharged their duty admirably. Following this example, the people, as soon as they know how to attack our adversaries, and to prate a little about things far from edifying, believe that they are perfect Christians. Meanwhile, there is nowhere to be seen modesty, charity, zeal, or ardor for God's glory; and in consequence of our conduct, God's holy name is everywhere subjected to horrible blasphemies.' 'Nobody,' writes Althamer, in the preface of his Catechism, 'cares to instruct his child, his servant, his maid, or any of his dependants, in the word of God or his fear; and thus *our young generation is the very worst that ever has existed*. The elders are worthless, and the young follow their example.' 'The children,' says Culmaun, 'are habituated to debauchery by their parents, and thus comes an endless train of diseases, seductions, tumults, murders, robberies, and thefts, which unhappily, owing to the state of society, are committed with security. And the worst of all is, that they are not ashamed to palliate their conduct by the examples of Noah, Lot, David, and others.'

"In one word, it would be as difficult to add to the catalogue of popular crimes enumerated by these men—'contempt, falsification, and persecution of God's word; abuse of his holy sacraments; idolatry, heresy, simony,

sorcery, heathenish and epicurean life, indifference about God, absolute infidelity, disregard of public worship, ignorance of the first elements of religion, and the whole hideous deluge of shame and sin shamelessly committed against God's commandments, not the mere result of human weakness and frailty, but persevered in remorselessly and unrepentingly, and regarded by the majority of men as no longer sinful and disgraceful, but as downright virtues, and legitimate subjects of boast and self-gratulation'—as it would to add to the evidence of the universal prevalence of such crimes which they supply, and for the truth of which they themselves challenge a denial. 'Take any class you please,' says Dietrich, 'high or low, you will find all equally degenerate and corrupt. What is more, there is no longer any social honesty to be found among the people. The majority persecute the gospel, and cling to the old idolatry. The rest, who have received God's word and gospel, are also lawless, insensible to instruction, hardened in their old sinful life, as is evident from the whoredom, adultery, usury, avarice, lying, cheating, and manifold wickedness which prevail.'

"There is one branch of this subject which we do not approach without great repugnance, but which, nevertheless, it would be most unhistorical, as well as unphilosophical, to overlook, because there is none in which the working of the positive teaching of the reformers is so palpably and unmistakably recognized. We refer to the avowed and undeniable deterioration of public morality,—the indifference to the maintenance of chastity, to the observance of the marriage vow, and indeed to the commonest decencies of life, by which the spread of Lutheranism was uniformly and instantaneously followed. We can not bring ourselves to pollute our page with the hateful and atrocious doctrines of Luther (vol. i, pp. 428-9), of Sarcerus (p. 431), Dresser (p. 432), Bugenhagen (p. 434), and many others (p. 431), founded upon what they allege to be the physical impossibility of observing continence, which results from the original constitution of the sexes as ordained by God; but we are necessitated to allude to them, in order to establish beyond question the connection of these doctrines (which, it must be remembered, were enforced by Luther chiefly in his German tracts and sermons addressed to the entire people) with the moral consequences which we shall proceed to detail, as briefly and as slightly as circumstances will permit, in the words of the authorities collected in the pages before us. Nothing can be more revolting than the picture of universal and unrestrained depravity which they reveal.

"'The youths of the present day,' says Brentius in 1532, 'are hardly released from their cradles when they must take women to themselves, and girls, long before they are marriageable, begin betimes to think of men: priests, monks, and nuns marry in despite of every human law.' Four years earlier, the reformer of Ulm, Conrad Ian, complained that 'impurity and adultery were universal in the world that each one corrupted his neigh-



bor, that it was no longer reputed as a sin or a shame, but was even made subject of public boast.' In 1537, Osiander complains, that 'so commonly, and, unhappily, in all places with so much impunity, were fornication and adultery practiced, that, revolting and unchristian as it is, wives and daughters were hardly secure among their own blood relations, where their virtue, honor, and purity should be most rigidly respected;' and his colleague Link avows, that 'nowadays the vice of unchastity is made a subject of laughter and of amusement.' Mathesius discovered a token of the approach of the end of the world in the prevalence of this vice. 'How universal was the practice of debauchery, adultery, fornication, incest, conjugal infidelity, we learn partly from the criminal processes, the consistories, and the superintendents, partly from private intercourse. Assuredly either the last day is at hand, or there is some awful pestilence at our door.'—'We Germans, nowadays,' says Sarcerus, in 1554, 'can boast but little of the virtue of chastity, and that little is disappearing so fast that we can hardly speak of it any more. The number who still love it are so small, that it would be matter not of surprise, but of absolute horror; and debauchery prevails without fear and without shame. The young learn it from the old; one vice leads to another, and now the young generation is so steeped in every species of vice, that they are more experienced in it than were the oldest people in former times.\*' Braunmüller, minister of Wurtemberg in 1560, complains that 'bastardy is very common. Every one is so hardened, and so habituated to this diabolical vice, that it is not considered grievous, for it is as daily bread everywhere around. Almost every wife is unfaithful; and hence no one need wonder that the band of adulterers in these our days is more powerful and influential than it was in the days of our ancestors, or even of the heathens.' Again, five years later, Andrew Hoppenrod raised the same complaint in Mansfeld. 'We see and hear (alas! God help us!) that impurity and fornication have made frightful inroads among Christians, and have sunk their roots so deeply, that it is hardly any longer reputed a sin, but is rather gloried in as a noble and desirable thing, without sorrow or remorse of conscience.' In 1573, Christopher Fischer, superintendent

---

\* "We shall leave the following passage (which, strange to say, is from an old popular hymn) in its original German:

'Die funft Kunst ist gemeine,  
Ist Ehebruch, Unkeuschheit  
Das kann jetzt gross und kleine  
Hat man jetzund Beschied.  
Man schamt sich auch nichts mehre,  
Man halt's gar fur eine Ehre;  
Niemand thut es fast wehren;  
Welcher's jetzt treibet viel,  
Will seyn im bessten Spiel.'

"After all, one can hardly wonder at this, when one recollects the chorus of what is still popularly preserved as Luther's favorite chant:

'Wer liebt nich Weiber, Wein, Gesang  
Er bleibt ein Narr sein Leben lang!'  
'Who loves not women, wine, and song,  
He lives a fool his lifetime long!'"



in Brunswick, complains in like manner, that 'such is the prevalence of whoredom and debauchery, that they are no longer looked on as sinful; any one who has the opportunity thinks he does well in availing himself of it, for the world does not punish it; and, as for adultery, so completely has it obtained the upperhand, that no punishment can avail any longer to suppress it!' "—Vol. ii, pp. 435–7.

"We can not venture to extend our extracts on this subject further. It need only be added, that the frightful state of morality depicted in these pages is attributed without disguise, even by the Lutherans themselves, to the doctrines of Luther already alluded to. The reader will find at pages 438–40 (of Döllinger) a long and most remarkable extract from Czacanovius, in which the connection is fully and freely admitted. Districts in which these crimes were utterly unknown, were scarcely initiated in the principles of the Reformation till they became corrupted to the heart's core. A most remarkable example of this is Ditmarsen, a district in Holstein, in which the Catholic religion was abolished in 1532. So remarkable had this province been for the purity and simplicity of its population, that it was known under the name of *Maryland* [Marienland]; cases of unchastity were so rare and unexampled, that the forfeiture of her virtue on the part of a female was visited with perpetual disgrace, and was generally atoned for by voluntary exile, and even in some cases by the suicide of the despairing defaulter. Before Lutheranism had been established ten years, its own apostle, Nicholas Boje (in 1541), was forced to complain that 'public crimes—especially whoredom, adultery, and merciless, heathenish, Jewish, nay, Turkish usury—prevail so universally, that he was obliged to call God to witness, that neither preaching, teaching, instruction, menaces, nor the terror of God's wrath, and of his righteous judgments, was of any avail.' The practice of divorce, too, was, in every reformed country, an immediate consequence of the Reformation; and if there were no other evidence of the connection between the introduction of the new religion and this frightful deterioration of morals, it would be found in the numberless laws against adultery, fornication, bigamy, etc., which date from this period, and the frequent and flagrant convictions and sentences under these laws in every Protestant province of Germany. For abundant and convincing evidence of all this, we must refer the reader to the fifteenth section of the first volume, which is a mine of curious and most extraordinary learning, but yet free from that coarseness and indelicacy in which learned writers too often feel themselves privileged to indulge in dealing with such subjects.

"Indeed, to add further testimonies would be but to weary and disgust the reader. We can say with truth, that to cull even these few from this mass of painful and revolting record, has been any thing but an agreeable task; and that the reader who will be content to pursue the general inquiry further for himself, to read through the evidence of Amsdorf, Spalatin, Bu-

genhagen, Gerbel, Major, Flacius Illyricus, Brentius, Schnepf, Wesshuss, Camerarius, and the numberless others whom the author's industry has accumulated, must make up his mind to encounter many shocking and disheartening details, for which the popular representations of the social and religious condition of the great era of the Reformation will have but ill prepared him.

"It must not be supposed that the testimonies which we have hitherto alleged, or the great mass of those collected by the author, describe the social condition but of a portion of Germany, under the Reformation. There is not a single locality which has not its witness. Saxony, Hesse, Nassau, Brandenburg, Strasburg, Nurnberg, Stralsund, Thorn, Mecklenburg, Westphalia, Pomerania, Friesland, Denmark, Sweden; and all, or almost all, are represented by natives, or, at least, residents, familiar with the true state of society, and, if not directly interested in concealing, certainly not liable to the suspicion of any disposition to exaggerate, its shortcomings or its crimes.

"Indeed, the connection between the progress of Lutheranism and this corruption of public morals, could not possibly be put more strikingly than in the words of John Belz, a minister of Allerstadt in Thuringia (1566): 'If you would find a multitude of brutal, coarse, godless people, among whom every species of sin is every day in full career, go into a city where the holy gospel is taught, and where the best preachers are to be met, and there you will be sure to find them in abundance. To be pious and upright (for which God praises Job) is nowadays held, if not to be a sin, at least a downright folly; and from many pulpits it is proclaimed, that good works are not only unnecessary, but hurtful to the soul.' "

Such then were the moral effects of the Reformation, according to the testimony of the reformers themselves. These new apostles professed indeed to *reform* the Church in doctrine and morals: they inveighed against the immorality of the Catholic priesthood, whom they abused and vilified beyond measure: they set themselves up as patterns for the world: but they forgot withal to reform *themselves* and their own disciples. They even went "daily from bad to worse." They were wholly unmindful of the admonition of the Saviour: "Let him that is without sin among you first cast a stone."\*

We subjoin to this copious evidence the following portrait-ure of the state of morals in Germany shortly after the beginning of the Reformation, drawn by one who will not be

---

\* St. John, viii : 7.

suspected,—Wolfgang Menzel. The horrible details which he furnishes on this subject, indicate a condition of courtly and general depravity which would seem almost incredible; but—alas! the evidence is overwhelming.

“The Protestants also allowed the opportunity offered to them by the emperor to pass unheeded, and, although they received a great accession in number, sank, from want of unity, in real power and influence. The rest of the German princes, Charles and Ernest of Baden, and Julius of Brunswick—Wolfenbüttel, the son of Henry the Wild—embraced Lutheranism. Austria, Bavaria, Lorraine, and Juliers remained Catholic. The reformers were devoid of union and energy, and oppressed by a sense of having abused and desecrated, instead of having rigidly prosecuted, the Reformation.

“Was their present condition the fitting result of a religious emancipation, or worthy of the sacred blood that had been shed in the cause? Instead of one Pope, the Protestants were oppressed by a number, each of the princes ascribing that authority to himself; and instead of Jesuits, they had court chaplains and superintendent-generals, who, their equals in venom, despised no means, however base, by which their aim might be attained. A new species of barbarism had found admittance into the Protestant courts and universities. The Lutheran chaplains shared their influence over the princes with mistresses, boon-companions, astrologers, alchymists, and Jews. The Protestant princes, rendered, by the treaty of Augsburg, unlimited dictators in matters of faith within their territories, had lost all sense of shame. Philip of Hesse married two wives. Brandenburg and pious Saxony yielded to temptation. Surrounded by coarse grooms, equerries, court-fools of obscene wit, misshapen dwarfs, the princes emulated each other in drunkenness, an amusement that entirely replaced the noble and gallant tournament of earlier times. Almost every German court was addicted to this bestial vice. Among others, the ancient house of Piast, in Silesia, was utterly ruined by it. Even Louis of Wurtemberg, whose virtues rendered him the darling of his people, was continually in a state of drunkenness. This vice and that of swearing even became a subject of discussion in the diet of the empire, [A. D. 1577,] when it was decreed, ‘That all electoral princes, nobles, and estates should avoid intemperate drinking as an example to their subjects.’ The chase was also followed to excess. The game was strictly preserved, and, during the hunt, the serfs were compelled to aid in demolishing their own corn-fields. The Jews and alchymists, whom it became the fashion to have at court, were by no means a slight evil, all of them requiring gold. Astrology would have been a harmless amusement had not its professors taken advantage of the ignorance and superstition of the times. False representations of the secret powers of nature and of the devil led to the belief in witch-

craft, and to the bloody persecution of its supposed agents. Luther's belief in the agency of the devil had naturally filled the minds of his followers with superstitious fears." . . . .

"The Ascanian family of Lauenburg was sunk in vice. The same license continued from one generation to another; the country was deeply in debt, and how, under the circumstances, the *cujus regio* was maintained, may easily be conceived. *The Protestant clergy of this duchy were proverbial for ignorance, license, and immorality.*

"*The imperial court at Vienna offered, by its dignity and morality, a bright contrast to the majority of the Protestant courts, whose bad example was, nevertheless, followed by many of the Catholic princes, who, without taking part in the Reformation, had thereby acquired greater independence.*"\*

Erasmus has well described this change for the worse in the morals of those who embraced the Reformation:

"Those whom I had known to be pure, full of candor and simplicity, these same persons have I seen afterwards, when they had gone over to the sect (of the gospellers,) begin to speak of girls, flock to games of hazard, throw aside prayer, give themselves up entirely to their interests; become the most impatient, vindictive and frivolous; changed in fact from men to vipers. I know well what I say."† And again: "I see many Lutherans, but few evangelicals. Look a little at these people, and say whether luxury, avarice, and lewdness, do not prevail still more amongst them, than among those whom they detest. Show me *one* who by means of this gospel is become better. I will show you very many who are become worse. Perhaps it has been my bad fortune: but I have seen none who have not become worse by their gospel."‡

The testimony of Erasmus is above suspicion. Though he continued in the Catholic Church, yet he was the early friend of Luther, Melancthon and several others among the principal reformers; and he had himself contributed not a little—perhaps, however, only indirectly and unintentionally—to the success of the pretended Reformation. He was a mild, peaceable man, who liked his ease more than any thing else in the world, and who sought to please both sides, but succeeded in pleasing neither. He had joined in the outcry against the Catholic priesthood and monks, and had thereby no doubt

---

\* History of Germany, ii, 280-1.

† Epist. Tractibus Germaniæ inferioria.

‡ Idem. Epist. Anno 1526.

greatly aided in heightening the excitement against the Catholic Church. The proverb was current in Germany: that "Erasmus had laid the egg, and Luther had hatched it."\* This saying perhaps expressed too much; but yet, like most popular adages, it had some foundation in truth. The famous humanist Reuchlin seems to have been another of those wavering and uncertain characters, who can be moulded to almost any form according to circumstances.

For three whole centuries, the Reformation has had full sway and perfect freedom of action throughout half of Germany and all of Northern Europe. What have been the practical results of its influence? What is the present moral condition of those Protestant countries where that influence has been least checked, and most extended and permanent? We will close this chapter, by presenting a few startling facts on this subject, from the works of two recent Protestant travelers, Bremner and Laing. Their authority in the matter will scarcely be questioned by Protestants. Themselves bitterly prejudiced against the Catholic Church, and enamored with the Reformation, they merely state what they saw and ascertained during a long residence in the countries which they respectively describe.

Of the people of Protestant Norway, Mr. Bremner says: "The Norwegians can not, with justice, be described as more than 'indifferently moral,' for we always found amongst them a greater desire to take advantage of a stranger than in any other part of Europe."† In regard to chastity, he tells us that the statistical returns show that out of every five children which are born, one is illegitimate—the same proportion precisely, in this widely scattered and rural population, as in "the densely crowded and corrupted atmosphere of Paris."

---

\* "Erasmus hat das Ey gelegt, und Luther es ausgebrütet." An old Lutheran painting represented the reformers bearing the ark, and Erasmus dancing before it with all his might!

† "Excursions in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden," etc. By Robert Bremner.—2 vols. 8vo, London, 1840.

Mr. Laing confirms the statement, and tells us of one country parish in particular where, "without a town, or manufacturing establishment, or resort of shipping, or quartering of troops, or other obvious cause," the proportion of illegitimate to legitimate children, in the five years from 1826 to 1830, was one in three.\*

Both these Protestant travelers tell us, moreover, that in Norway the Sunday is the usual day for dances, for theatrical and other public amusements; and Mr. Laing accounts for this singular fact by the universally received interpretation, in the *pure* Lutheran Church, of the Scriptural words, "and the evening and the morning made the first day." Those "pure Lutherans," going further than even the Jews of the straightest sect, keep the Sabbath from midday on Saturday to the noon of Sunday! The Lutheran clergy, they likewise inform us, pay little attention to the instruction of the people. In proof of this gross negligence, they allege the fact, that in all Norway there are only three hundred and thirty-six parishes with resident clergymen, who seldom visit their scattered people. They also justly complain, that convicts are there treated more unmercifully than any where else.

The picture they draw of the present moral condition of Sweden and Denmark is even still less flattering. Mr. Bremner tells us, that in the female house of correction at Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, he found thirty-eight prisoners condemned for life, "nearly all of whom had been convicted of the too frequent crime of child murder!" Mr. Laing enters at great length into the subject of Swedish morality. He states, and he proves from regularly avouched statistical returns, that Sweden is the most corrupt and demoralized

---

\* The works of Mr. Laing from which we borrow this and the following facts, are: "Journal of a Residence in Norway during the years 1834, 1835, 1836, made with a view to inquire into the moral and political economy of the country, and the state of the inhabitants," London, 1836; "A Tour in Sweden in 1838," London, 1839; and "Notes of a Traveler," London, 1842. These works are all ably noticed in the Dublin Review for May, 1843.

country in Europe, and that Stockholm is the most debased city in the world. Here is his testimony, which has been often quoted:

"It is a singular and embarrassing fact, that the Swedish nation, isolated from the mass of European people, and almost entirely agricultural or pastoral, having, in about three millions of individuals, only fourteen thousand nine hundred and twenty-five employed in manufactories, and these not congregated in one or two places, but scattered among two thousand and thirty-seven factories, having no great standing army or navy, no external commerce, no afflux of strangers, no considerable city but one, and having schools and universities in a fair proportion, and a powerful and complete church establishment, undisturbed in its labors by sect or schism, is, notwithstanding, *in a more demoralized state than any nation in Europe*, more demoralized even than any equal portion of the dense manufacturing population of Great Britain. This is a very curious fact in moral statistics."

He proceeds to establish this singular fact by unquestionable, because official statistical evidence. From this it appears that, in 1837, twenty-six thousand two hundred and seventy-five persons were prosecuted in Sweden for criminal offenses, of whom twenty-one thousand two hundred and sixty-two were convicted, being one to every one hundred and fourteen of the entire population accused, and one to every one hundred and forty convicted of crimes of a heinous character. In 1836, the number so convicted was one out of one hundred and thirty-four of the whole population. Among the crimes in the rural population, there were twenty-eight cases of murder, ten of child murder, four of poisoning, thirteen of bestiality, and nine of violent robbery: and the proportion was four-fold greater for the town and city population. England is bad enough; one would even have thought that England could scarcely be surpassed in crime of every description; yet in England the proportion of the convicted to the entire population is only as one to one thousand and five. The amount of crime in Sweden is thus seven-fold greater than it is in England! Is it because there the Reformation was more unchecked in its operations, and had therefore a freer field?

According to Mr. Laing, the proportion of illegitimate to



legitimate children, for all Sweden, is as one to fourteen; and for the capital, Stockholm, it is as one to two and three-tenths! In the same city one, out of every forty-nine of the inhabitants, is annually convicted of some criminal offense!

When these statements of Mr. Laing appeared, the Swedish government attempted to refute them, by a pamphlet published in London. This drew from him a Reply, in which he triumphantly established all the statements he had previously made, and exhibited, in the avouched statistics of the year 1838, others still more appalling:

"The divorces of this year were one hundred and forty-seven; the suicides one hundred and seventy-two. Of the two thousand seven hundred and fourteen children born in Stockholm that year, one thousand five hundred and seventy-seven were legitimate, one thousand one hundred and thirty-seven illegitimate, making only a balance of four hundred and forty chaste mothers out of two thousand seven hundred and fourteen, and the proportion of illegitimate to legitimate children, not as one to two and three-tenths, as he had previously stated, but as one to one and a half!!"

Prussia is another country of Europe in which the Reformation has had almost unchecked sway for three centuries. Mr. Laing discourses of its moral condition as follows—the "index virtue" of which he speaks is female chastity:

"Will any traveler, will any Prussian say that this index virtue of the moral condition of a people is not lower in Prussia than in almost any part of Europe? It is no uncommon event in the family of a respectable tradesman of Berlin to find upon his breakfast table a little baby, of which, whoever may be the father, he has no doubt at all about the maternal grandfather. Such accidents are so common in the class in which they are least common with us—the middle class, removed from ignorance or indigence—that they are regarded but as accidents, as youthful indiscretions, not as disgraces affecting, as with us, the respectability and happiness of all the kith and kin for a generation."

In a note, he gives the following statistical facts on this subject:

"In 1837, the number of the females in the Prussian population between the beginning of their sixteenth and the end of their forty-fifth year—that is, within child-bearing age—was two millions nine hundred and eighty-three thousand one hundred and forty-six; the number of illegitimate chil-



dren born in the same year was thirty-nine thousand five hundred and one; so that one in every seventy-five of the whole of the females of an age to bear children had been the mother of an illegitimate child." He adds: "Prince Puckler Muskau (a Prussian) states in one of his late publications (*Südöstlicher Bildersaal*, 3 Theil. 1841) that the character of the Prussians for honesty stands lower than that of any other of the German populations."\*

---

## CHAPTER X.

### THE INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON PUBLIC WORSHIP.

General influence of the Reformation on worship—Audin's picture of it—Luther rebukes violence—But wavers—Giving life to a skeleton—Taking a leap—Mutilating the sacraments—New system of Judaism—Chasing away the mists—Protestant inconsistencies—A dreary waste—No altars nor sacrifice—A land of mourning—Protestant complaints—And tribute to Catholic worship—A touching anecdote—Continual prayer—Vandalism rebuked—Grandeur of Catholic worship—Churches always open—Protestant worship—The *Sabbath* day—Getting up a revival—Protestant music and prayer—The pew system—The *fashionable* religion—The two forms of worship compared—St. Peter's church—The fine arts.

IN nothing perhaps was the influence of the Reformation more pernicious, than in the changes which it caused to be introduced into public worship. It stripped the ancient Catholic service of its beauty and simple grandeur: it dried up the deep fountains of its melody—hushed its organs, muffled its Angelus bells, and put out its lights. It rudely tore away the ornaments of its priesthood, stripped its altars, and chased away the clouds of its ascending incense. It did even more. It destroyed the beautiful paintings and sculptures, with which art, paying tribute to religion, had decorated the walls

---

\* That the rural population of England is not much, if at all better, in a moral point of view, than that of Sweden and Prussia, clearly appears from the late work of Joseph Kay, which was noticed in a late number of *Brownson's Review*.

of the churches;—and when it did not ruthlessly destroy, it entirely removed those sacred emblems of piety. Tearing them in shreds or breaking them in pieces, it gave them, in almost numberless instances, to the flames, and then scattered their ashes to the winds. And, as if these feats of Vandalism were not enough to prove its *burning* zeal for religion, it aimed a mortal blow at the very substance of worship: it abolished the daily sacrifice, removed the altars, and annihilated the priesthood. And then, exhausted with its labors, Protestantism lay down, and fell asleep amidst the ruins it had caused!\*

Audin gives the following graphic description of the effects of early Reformation zeal on public worship:

“Throughout the whole of Saxony, no more canticles were heard; no more incense, no more lights on the altars, no more organs combining their melody with the infant’s hymn, or sacerdotal anthem. The church walls were bare; the light had no longer to steal through the painted windows, for they had all been broken, under the pretext that they favored idolatry. The Protestant temple resembled every thing but the house of God. The magnificence and poetry of Catholic worship, the loss of which modern Protestants deplore, everywhere disappeared.”†

Luther at first disapproved of the intemperate zeal of Karlstadt and of other hot-headed disciples, who, during his absence from Wittenberg, had abolished the Mass, and removed by violence the paintings and statues from the church of All Saints. Yet his disapproval did not, it would seem, proceed so much from a horror of the act itself, as of the violence which had attended it; and more particularly from the circumstance, that this innovation had taken place without his having been previously consulted! In his harangue against those new Iconoclasts, he said:

“You ought to know that you are to listen to no one but to me. With the help of God, Doctor Martin Luther has advanced first in the new way;

\* “Le Protestantisme fatigué s’est endormi sur des ruines!—Exhausted Protestantism fell asleep amidst ruins.”—Abbé De Lamennais.

† Life of Luther, p. 331.

the others followed after him ; they ought to exhibit the docility of disciples, as their duty is to obey. It is to me that God has revealed His word ; it is out of my mouth that it has proceeded free from all stain. . . . Was I at such a distance that I could not be consulted ? Am I no longer the source of pure doctrine ? . . . It is neither commanded nor prohibited to keep images. I wish that superstition had not introduced them amongst us ; but however they ought not to be removed by tumult.”\*

But Luther, however he might deplore, could not curb the destructive spirit of his disciples. He could not prevent them from wielding the weapons which himself had placed in their hands. He could not control the storm which he himself had put in motion. The work of destruction went on, till scarce a vestige of the venerable and time-honored Catholic worship remained behind. He himself was uncertain and wavering, as to the portion of Catholic worship he should retain. The people of Wittenberg murmured, when the chapter of the church of All Saints in that city abolished the Mass during his absence from the city. “Luther restored it: not however as a sacrifice, but as a mere popular symbol. He took from it the offertory and the canon, and all the forms of sacrifice ; while he retained the elevation of the bread and wine by the priest, the sacerdotal salutation to the assistants, the mixture of water and wine, and the use of the Latin language.”†

To enliven somewhat this mutilated skeleton of the old service, he retained many of the Catholic proses and hymns, uniting with them some compositions of the old German poets.

“He himself composed some to replace our hymns and proses, which are precious monuments of the poetry of the early ages of Catholicism. Those sweet and simple melodies which were by turns joyous and austere, gay and melancholy, according to the occasion, were now replaced, in the Protestant Churches by a monotonous drawl. The reformed church thus lost the poems, inspirations, and symbols of the Catholic muse.”‡

The liturgy was not the only subject on which the reformer

\* Apud Audin, *ibid.* pp. 237, 238.

† Audin, *ibid.* p. 333.

‡ *Ibid.* For some beautiful and charming reflections on this subject, see an article “on Prayer and Prayer-books,” in a late number of the *Dublin Review*.

hesitated. His whole career, in fact, is marked with hesitancy and doubt, as to what he should reject, and what he should retain, of the old Catholic institutions. He often found himself in trying and difficult positions. His impatient disciples sought to drag him down the declivity of reform much faster than the sturdy monk wished to travel. Sometimes he listened to their clamors; sometimes he sternly rebuked them for their over ardent zeal. Hence his perpetual inconsistencies. On the subject of auricular confession, he contradicted himself more than once: at times he recognized its divine origin, and proclaimed its great utility to society: again he would call it the invention of Satan, and "the executioner of consciences."\* He betrayed similar doubts and inconsistencies as to the number of the sacraments instituted by Christ. He stood on the brink of a precipice, and yielded at times to dizziness, ere he took the fatal leap from the summit-level of Catholicity, into the yawning abyss, the boiling and hissing noise of whose troubled waters already grated harshly on his ears!

But his disciples were not so scrupulous. They boldly rejected five out of the seven sacraments, and even stripped the two they retained—Baptism and the Lord's Supper—of every life-giving principle. They did not any longer view them as the channels of grace, through which the waters of life eternal flow into the soul of the Christian. This principle they rejected with horror as a Popish superstition. They denied that the sacraments had, from the design and institution of Christ, any intrinsic efficacy whatever: they were the mere external symbols of a grace, which they were not the instruments of imparting. They were mere signs and figures, lifeless in themselves, and useful and available, only through and in proportion to the faith and other acts, of the recipient. In fact they were brought down, in every respect, to a level with

---

\* *Conscientiarum Carnificina*—See his Treatise, *De ratione confitendi*.  
 - Tom. vi, edit. Altenb. Tom. i, opp. edit. Jena.

the ancient Jewish types and figures; and like them, they were mere "weak and needy elements."\* Thus the Reformation brought back Christianity into the shadowy region of carnal Judaism, under the pretext of restoring the Church to its primitive purity

They were even inferior to these, in point of appropriateness and significance, as mere figures. Was not the Jewish eating of the paschal lamb "of one year old and without stain," a much more lively and appropriate type of the death of Christ—"the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world"—than the symbols of mere bread and wine? What aptitude is there, in fact, in bread to be a figure of flesh, or even in wine, which is often almost colorless, to be a figure of blood? Had Christ intended a mere figure, would he not have selected more appropriate emblems? Did he mean to bring back the Christian religion, which he watered with his own blood, to the mere standard of Judaism—did he mean to lower it even beneath this standard? Did he institute a religion, the distinguishing ordinances of which should contain nothing more substantial than the Jewish tropes and figures? Was it to be still enveloped in that dense mist, which had overhung the ark of the covenant, and the institutions of the Jewish religion? Or did he not rise on the world, as "the Sun of Justice," to chase away those mists, which had darkened the twilight of the Jewish types, and to usher in the clear, cloudless day of living and breathing realities?

Luther retained, indeed, a belief in the real presence, blended, however, with the palpable absurdity of consubstantiation; by which he maintained the simultaneous presence of the substances of the bread and wine with the body of Christ. But even many among the disciples of the reformer have long since rejected this monstrous system. After six different modifications of their creed on the subject, to

---

\* Galatians, iv: 9.

suit the tastes or to meet the objections of the Sacramentarians, they seem at length to have substantially coalesced with their former opponents; and the doctrine of the real presence has thus grown almost, if not entirely, obsolete among Protestants.\* Thus, throughout almost the whole land of Protestantism, this beautiful doctrine, which gives a sublime character to the Catholic worship, and is a key to all its magnificent ceremonial, has been utterly banished. The Protestant church and worship are no longer ennobled and vivified by this life-giving presence of the Word made flesh. Christ is banished from his own holy temple: he is no longer in the midst "of the children of men," where He before delighted to dwell. And the domain of Protestantism presents, in its bleak and dreary waste, a sad proof of His absence! It is a land "of closed churches and hushed bells, of unlighted altars and unstoled priests!"†

No—its condition is still more deplorable. It has not even "unlighted altars;" it has no altars at all! Its altars fell under the same Vandalic stroke which annihilated its sacrifice: "Sacrifice and oblation is cut off from the house of the Lord; the priests, the Lord's ministers, have mourned; the country is destroyed; the land hath mourned."‡—This land of mourning, from which even "the priests, the Lord's ministers," have been banished, has been reposing for "many days" "without sacrifice, and without altar, and without ephod, and without theraphim."§

Where is there to be found, in the land of Protestantism, that clean oblation foretold by God's holy prophet: "For from the rising of the sun, even to the going down, my name is great among the gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and

---

\* For a full and well written statement of these variations of Lutheranism on the subject of the Eucharist, and for an account of the singular manner of the coalition indicated in the text, see Moore's "Travels of an Irish Gentleman," etc., p. 202 and p. 193.

† W. Faber, "Sights and Thoughts in Foreign Churches."

‡ Joel, i: 9, 10.

§ Osee, iii: 4.

there is offered to my name a *clean oblation*; for my name is great among the gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts?"\*—Where that altar, which St. Paul assures us the early Christians had: "We have AN ALTAR whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle?"† Until Protestantism appeared, with its blighting influence on worship, who ever heard of a religion, Christian or even pagan, the very essence of which did not consist in an external sacrifice? In this respect the Reformation has *protested* against the unanimous voice of mankind. And we have already seen from what particular *personage* Luther first learned the reasons for this protest, and how eagerly he seized and acted on them.‡

With the sacrifice, the priesthood, and the altar, fell also the splendid worship with which they were connected. Protestants, even those of Germany, lately began to appreciate and to deplore this desecration of God's holy sanctuary, and this desolation of His once fruitful vineyard; and their voice of wailing was re-echoed by the Puseyites in England. We will give a few instances of this splendid tribute paid, by late Protestant writers in Germany, to the substance and forms of the splendid old Catholic worship.

Isidore, Count Von Loeben, exclaims:

"Admirable ceremonial, replete with harmony! It is the diamond which glitters on the crown of faith! Whoever has a poetic spirit must feel a tendency to Catholicism!"§—Elsewhere he says: "The Catholic Church, with its ever open door, with its undying lamps, its joyful or mournful strains, its hosannas or its lamentations, its hymns, its Masses, its festivals and reminiscences, resembles a mother, who ever holds forth her arms to receive the prodigal child. It is a fountain of sweet water, around which are assembled multitudes, to imbibe vigor, health, and life."||

Another German Protestant breaks forth into this exclamation:

"How beautiful is its music! How it addresses both mind and sense! Those melodious notes and voices, those canticles which breathe so pure a

\* Malachy, i: 2

† Heb., xiii: 10.

‡ Supra, Chapter i.

§ In his *Lotosblätter*, 1817.

|| Ibid., p. 1.

spirituality, those clouds of incense, those chimes which a disdainful philosophy condescends to despise : all these please God. Architects and sculptors ! you have acted wisely, and ennobled your art, by raising churches to the Divinity.”\*

Another, E. Spindler, thus praises a beautiful custom peculiar to Catholicity :

“It is not only an ancient, but a beautiful custom, to encircle the graves of the dead on the first and second of November. The peasants of the villages hasten to the cemeteries : they kneel by a wooden cross, or other such funeral ornaments. They think on the past, on the shortness of human life. Then the departed are crowned with flowers, to signify the life that will never end. The lamp burns to remind us of the light which shall never be obscured !”†

Another relates the following touching anecdote :

“I saw also a Franciscan kneeling before a fresco painting of Christ on the walls of the cloister, which was admirable for its truth and beauty of expression. On hearing me approach, he rose up. ‘Father, that is really beautiful.’—‘Yes ; but the original is still more so,’ said the monk, smiling.—‘Then why make use of a material image in prayer ?’—‘I see,’ said he, ‘that you are a Protestant ; but do you not see that the artist modulates and ennobles the fantasies of my own imagination ? Have you not always experienced that this faculty calls up a thousand different forms ? Permit me to prefer, when there is question of images, the work of a great master to the creation of my own fancy.’—I was silent,” concludes the writer.‡

In one of his works,§ Clausen, another Protestant, pays the following willing tribute to the encouragement of continual prayer by the Catholic Church :

“When a poor pilgrim, wearied with fatigue, but light of heart, kneels on the altar steps to thank Him who has watched over him during a long and perilous journey ; when a distracted mother comes into the temple to pray for the recovery of her son, whom the physicians have given over ; when in the evening, just as the last rays of the sun steal through the stained glass on the figure of a young female engaged in prayer, when the flickering lights of the tapers die away on the pale lips of the clergy, as they chaunt the praises of the Eternal ;—tell me, does not Catholicism teach us that life

\* Leibnitz, Syst. Theol., p. 205.

† Zeitspiegel, 1791.

‡ Ch. Fr. D. Schubart—Leben und Gesinnungen—Stuttgart. 1791.

§ P. 790. Apud Audin, p. 331.



should be one long prayer, that art and science ought to combine to glorify God, and that the Church, where so many canticles are simultaneously hymned forth, where devotion puts on all conceivable forms, has a right to our love and respect?"

Finally, another thus openly censures the intemperate Vandalism of the reformers in destroying the most beautiful portions of Catholic worship:

"How blind were our reformers! While destroying the greater part of the allegories of the Catholic Church, they believed that they were making war on superstition! It was the abuse they ought to have proscribed."\* The famous Novalis in fact says, that "Luther was not acquainted with the spirit of Christianity."†—Thus have the children borne testimony against their fathers in the faith!‡

It is related of Frederick II., king of Prussia, that after having assisted at a solemn high Mass celebrated in the church of Breslau by Cardinal Zinzendorf, he remarked: "The Calvinists treat God as an inferior, the Lutherans, as an equal; but the Catholics treat him as God." And though this is perhaps too strong an expression of opinion as to the difference existing between the Catholic and the Protestant forms of worship; yet this difference is very great and very striking, even to the most superficial or prejudiced observer. Who has not been impressed with the grandeur, the solemnity, and the noble dignity of the Catholic ceremonial? Who has not felt a sentiment of reverence and of awe come over him, when, at the most solemn part of this service, the peal of the organ ceases, the voice of music is hushed, and, while clouds of incense are ascending, the priests, the ministers, and the people all fall prostrate in silent prayer before the altar, on which the Lamb is present "as it were slain?" Who has not felt a thrill of rapturous emotion, when, after this solemn moment has passed, the music again breaks forth,

\* Fessler—Theresia 2, p. 101.

† "Luther verkannte den geist des Christenthums."

‡ For more testimonies of Protestants on this subject, see Jul. Höninghaus "Das Resultat meiner wanderungen"—Aschaffenburg, 1835.

mingling joyous with solemn notes, and pouring forth a stream of delicious melody on the soul! Who has not been struck with the pathetic simplicity, the unction, and noble grandeur of the Gregorian chant, especially in the Preface and the Pater Noster! And who has not marked the reverent awe with which Catholics are wont to assist at the service, as well as the general respect they pay to the church of God!

In Catholic countries, the church is ever open, inviting the faithful to enter at all hours, and to pour forth their joys or their sorrows before the altar. And in Rome particularly, enter any one of its three hundred and fifty churches at what hour you may, you will always find some persons kneeling, engaged in secret prayer. The Catholic worship is not confined to Sundays: it is the business of every day, and there is accordingly a special service for every day in the year. The constant round of festivals presents to the minds of the people, with dramatic effect, the most interesting portions of sacred history, as well as the most striking incidents in the lives of the Blessed Virgin and of the saints: and the necessary result is, to keep these things constantly fresh in the memory. Finally, the Catholic is bound by the law of his Church to assist at divine service, and to hear Mass every Sunday and festival of the year, and thus he comes constantly under all the strong beneficial influences of his religion. And if, notwithstanding all these advantages, he is still sometimes recreant to the voice of conscience and of duty, it is surely from no lack of provision for his spiritual culture on the part of the Church. She shows herself, in every respect, the tender and solicitous mother. Do the multiplied forms of worship introduced by the Reformation possess these advantages; or do they combine these happy influences? To begin with the one last named: is it not a saddening reflection, that in Protestant countries, no obligation is felt to attend divine service, even on Sundays? Take London for an example of this. According to Colquhoun's statistical views of that Protestant metropolis, out of nearly fifteen hundred

thousand inhabitants, about one-third, or five hundred thousand *never* attend church; and another third attend it only occasionally! Of the remaining third, who attend regularly, probably more than half are Roman Catholics.

True, in our own country the case is somewhat different: but it is only because here Protestantism has not *yet* produced, at least to the same extent, the evil fruits of religious indifference and of infidelity, which it has never failed to yield in countries where it has been long established. But even here it is daily producing them more and more; and under its influence, each succeeding generation must necessarily deteriorate. Look at Boston and New York, where infidelity has already boldly raised its standard. It is only by almost limiting religious service to the Sunday—miscalled the *Sabbath*—and by continued efforts through the press and the pulpit to keep up an exaggerated and nearly Jewish feeling of reverence for this day among the people, that any thing like regular attendance on Sunday service is obtained.

In fact, according to the gloomy ideas now generally attached by American Protestants of the stricter sects to the “Sabbath” day, the people after having labored constantly through the six days of the week, have no other place of social gathering but at the meeting-house; and they have no alternative but to repair thither, or to sit down moodily or inertly at home. And we have no doubt, that it is to this cause, and to the cutting off of all sources of popular amusement, as much at least as to zeal for religious worship, that we are to attribute the frequenting of the Protestant places of public service in the United States.

But is the usual Protestant service in itself either inviting or impressive? Has it any thing in it to stir up the deep fountains of feeling; to call forth the music and poetry of the soul; to convey salutary instruction, or to awaken lively interest? We would not speak lightly or irreverently on a subject so grave: but with due deference to the feelings of our dissentient brethren, we must express the conviction, that

their service is sadly deficient in solemnity, as well as in feeling; and that it possesses not one trait of either grandeur or sublimity. It has certainly not one element of poetry or of pathos. Generally cold and lifeless, it becomes warm only by a violent effort, and then it runs into the opposite extreme of intemperate excitement.

Can its music, with its loud, multiplied, and discordant sounds, compare for a moment with the grave and solemn melody of the Catholic worship? Can its long extemporaneous prayers, often pronounced by a minister dressed in his everyday attire, and occasionally, it may be, interrupted by the sharp amens and discordant groans of his hearers, compare, for solemnity and effect, with that which is poured forth by the priest at the altar, robed in the venerable uniform of eighteen hundred years' standing, and which is accompanied by those of the people uttered in the hushed stillness of secret devotion? For our parts, we greatly prefer calm composure and sanctuary quietude in the church, to noisy prayer and almost boisterous excitement. The Lord does not usually communicate himself to His adorers in the whirlwind, or in the earthquake, or in the raging fire; but in the breathing of the gentle breeze.\*

Again, in Catholic countries there is no pew system. The rich and the poor, the prince and the beggar, the refined princess and the lowly peasant girl, kneel side by side on the same pavement, and at the foot of the same altar. There is no distinction there in the house of God. Is it so in Protestant countries? Has not the pew system, with all its invidious distinctions of rank, with its luxurious and splendidly cushioned seats, more suited for lolling than for prayers, obtained universally wherever Protestantism has been established? And has not the natural and necessary effect been, to introduce worldly notions even into the house of God; and to

---

\* See III. Book of Kings, chap. xix, v. 11, 12. In Prot. version, I. Book Kings.

make church-going a matter of fashion and respectability? Do not many people even inquire, before they embrace a religion, which is the most *respectable* and fashionable church?

True, in countries where Protestants are most numerous, and where it would be difficult to support the Church otherwise, Catholics likewise have often borrowed the invidious system from their neighbors: but candor will allow, that among them it is not pushed to the same extreme as among Protestants. It is, moreover, strongly counteracted in its evil tendencies by the spirit of their Church.

The Catholic ceremonial was designed and planned on a grand and magnificent scale. Hence it is exhibited to the best advantage in the largest churches, and has the most impressive and sublime effect in such temples as St. Mary Major's and St. Peter's at Rome. The Protestant service, on the contrary, is as contracted in its nature, as it is meagre in its details, and cold and unimpressive in its general effect. It is wholly out of place in a very extensive church. In St. Paul's church, in London, it is confined to one segment of the centre aisle: the other portions of the church seem utterly useless. So it is in the splendid old cathedrals of England, Ireland, and Scotland, built by our Catholic forefathers on the grand scale of the Catholic worship, but now occupied as Protestant meeting-houses. In the Protestant service, almost every thing is for the ear, and almost nothing for the eye: in the Catholic, all the senses are addressed, and all are enchained.

In nothing does the immense distinction between the Catholic and the Protestant forms of worship appear more strikingly, than in the marked difference in the structure, beauty, and ornaments of the churches in which they are respectively performed. Where, for instance, in the whole land of Protestantism, will you find one church to compare in beauty and sublimity with St. Peter's at Rome? It is an architectural monument as old as Protestantism, and, as a merely material structure, much more stable and permanent than Protestant-

ism! It has seen hundreds of sects arise, create excitement for a day, and then die away; while itself has continued in unfading beauty—the sublime emblem of unchanging and undying Catholicity! Not one of its stones has started from its place: not one of its pillars has been shaken; not one of its arches has been broken! It stands bravely erect, in all the vigor and freshness of youth, a suitable type of the ever-blooming and virgin spouse of Christ, “without spot, without wrinkle, without blemish.”\* Enter its portals, and your soul expands with the noble building; and you involuntarily exclaim: “Truly, this is the house of God and the gate of heaven!” The fine arts have here been lavish of their tribute to religion and to God: and they speak silently, but eloquently, of Christ, of His Mother, of His apostles, and of His saints.—Why have these lovely arts been banished from the Protestant churches?

“O when will the ages of faith e'er return,  
To gladden the nations again?  
O when shall the flame of sweet charity burn,  
To warm the cold bosoms of men?

“When the angel of vengeance hath sheathed his sword,  
And his vials have drenched the land:  
When the pride of the sophist hath bent to the Lord,  
And trembled beneath His strong hand.”

---

\* Ephesians, chap. v.

## CHAPTER XI.

INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON THE BIBLE,  
ON BIBLE READING, AND BIBLICAL STUDIES.

"By various texts we both uphold our claim,  
Nay, often ground our titles on the same;  
After long labors lost and time's expense,  
Both grant the words, and quarrel for the sense.  
Thus all disputes forever must depend,  
For no dumb rule can controversies end."—DRYDEN.

"Mark you this, Bassanio:  
The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose. . . .  
In religion what damning error  
But some sober brow can bless it,  
And approve it with a text."—SHAKESPEARE.

Protestant boastings—Theory of D'Aubigné—Luther finds a Bible—How absurd!—The "chained Bible"—Maitland's triumphant refutation—Seckendorf *versus* D'Aubigné—Menzel's testimony—The Catholic Church and the Bible—The Latin language—Vernacular versions before Luther's—In Germany—In Italy—In France—In Spain—In England—In Flanders—In Slavonia—In Sweden—In Iceland—Syriac and Armenian versions—Summary and inference—Polyglots—Luther's false assertion—Reading the Bible—Fourth rule of the index—A religious vertigo remedied—More harm than good—Present discipline—A common slander—Protestant versions—Mutual compliments—Version of King James—The Douay and Vulgate Bibles—Private interpretation—German rationalism—Its blasphemies—Rationalism in Geneva.

OUR inquiry into the influence of the Reformation on religion would be incomplete, without some examination into the extent of this influence on the Bible, and on the general diffusion and character of Biblical learning. It is one of the proudest boasts of the Reformation, that it rescued the Bible from the obscurity to which the Roman Catholic Church had consigned it; that it first translated the Bible into the vernacular tongues; and thereby opened its hitherto concealed treasures of heavenly wisdom to the body of the people. These pretensions have been so often and so confidently re-

peated, that they have passed current for the truth, even with many sincere and otherwise well-informed persons; whose conviction on this subject is so strong, that it seems difficult to remove it even by most overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

According to our historian of the Reformation, Luther owed his first conversion to Christianity to an accidental discovery of the Bible in the library of the university at Erfurth. Here is his curious statement on the subject;—it will be borne in mind that Luther was then twenty years of age, and had been a student at the university of Erfurth for about two years:

“One day he was opening the books in the library one after another, in order to read the names of the authors. One which he opened in its turn drew his attention: *he had not seen any thing like it till that hour*; he reads the title, it is a Bible, a rare book, *unknown at that time*! His interest is strongly excited; he is filled with astonishment at finding more in this volume than those fragments of the gospels and epistles, which the Church has selected to be read to the people in their places of worship every Sunday in the year. Till then he had thought that they were the whole word of God. And here are so many pages, so many chapters, so many books, of which he had no idea! His heart beats as he holds in his hand all the Scripture divinely inspired. With eagerness and indescribable feelings he turns over those leaves of the word of God. The first page that arrests his attention, relates the history of Hannah and the young Samuel.”\*

He then relates how the young Luther piously resolved to imitate the devotedness of the young Samuel; and he continues:

“The Bible that had filled him with such transport was in Latin. He soon returned to the library to find his treasure again. He read and re-read, and then in his surprise and joy went back to read again. The first gleams of a new truth then arose in his mind. Thus has God caused him to find his holy word! He has now discovered the book of which he is one day to give to his countrymen that admirable translation, in which the Germans for three centuries have read the oracles of God. For the first time, perhaps, this precious volume has been removed from the place that it occupied in the library of Erfurth. This book, deposited on the unknown

---

\* D'Aubigné, vol. i, p. 131.



shelves of a dark room, is soon to become the book of life for a whole nation. The Reformation lay hid in that Bible.”\*

This was not, however, the only Bible he had the good fortune to find: for after he had entered the convent of the Augustinians at Erfurth, “he found another Bible fastened by a chain.”†

D'Aubigné professes to borrow all this fine history from Mathesius, a disciple and an ardent and credulous admirer of Luther, and from Adam, another partial biographer of the reformer. The story is too absurd, and too clumsily contrived even for a well-digested romance. What? Are we to believe that Luther, at the age of twenty, did not know that there was a Bible, until he chanced to discover one in the library at Erfurth? And that until then he piously believed, that the whole Scriptures were comprised in that choice selection of gospels and epistles which were read on Sundays in the Church service? He, too, a young man of great talent and promise, who had successively attended the schools of Mansfeld, Eisenach, and Magdeburg, and had already been two years at the university of Erfurth! The thing is utterly incredible, and is stamped with palpable absurdity on its very face. Luther must have been singularly stupid indeed, had he remained thus ignorant. And then the idea intended to be conveyed by the chained Bible! Would the good monks have enchained it, unless it was in such demand with the people as to endanger its safety? In that early period of the art of printing, books were much more scarce and more highly prized than at present; and perhaps then, as now, borrowed books were seldom returned to the owner.

Dr. Maitland, a learned English Protestant writer, triumphantly refutes, and merrily laughs at the absurd and glaringly mendacious assertion of D'Aubigné, that the Bible was “an unknown book” before the days of Luther. We give an extract from his refutation, which will be found both interesting and instructive, as well as amusing:

---

\* D'Aubigné, vol. i, p. 132.

† Ibid., p. 141.

Is it not odd that Luther had not by some chance or other heard of the Psalms? —But there is no use in criticising such nonsense. Such it must appear to every moderately informed reader; but he will not appreciate its absurdity until he is informed that, on the same page, this precious historian has informed his readers, that, in the course of the two preceding years, Luther had ‘applied himself to learn the philosophy of the middle ages, in the writings of Occam, Scot (Scotus), Bonaventure, and Thomas Aquinas;’—of course none of those poor creatures knew any thing about the Bible!

“The fact, however, to which I have so repeatedly alluded is simply this—the writings of the Dark Ages are, if I may use the expression, *made of the Scriptures*. I do not merely mean that the writers constantly quoted the Scriptures, and appealed to them as authority on all occasions, as other writers have done since their day—though they did this, and it is a strong proof of their familiarity with them—but I mean that they thought and spoke and wrote the thoughts and words and phrases of the Bible, and that they did this constantly and habitually as the natural mode of expressing themselves. They did it, too, not exclusively in theological or ecclesiastical matters, but in histories, biographies, familiar letters, legal instruments, and documents of every description.”\*

The English church historian, Milner, has strangely enough fallen into the same absurd error as D'Aubigné. In the fourth volume of his work, p. 324, he thus relates the wonderful discovery of a Bible by Luther: “In the second year after Luther had entered into the monastery, he accidentally met with a Latin Bible in the library. It proved to him a treasure. Then he first discovered that there were MORE Scripture passages extant than those which were read to the people: for the Scriptures were at that time very little known in the world.” Whereupon Dr. Maitland comments as follows:

“Really one hardly knows how to meet such statements; but will the reader be so good as to remember that we are not now talking of the Dark Ages, but of a period when the *press* had been *half a century* in operation; and will he give a moment's reflection to the following statement, which I

---

\* The Dark Ages; a Series of Essays intended to illustrate the state of Religion and Literature in the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. By Rev. S. R. Maitland, D.D., F.R.S. and F.S.A., sometime Librarian to the late Archbishop of Canterbury and Keeper of the MSS. at Lambeth. Third edition. London, 1853. 8vo. P. 468, seq.

believe to be correct, and which can not, I think, be so far inaccurate as to affect the argument. To say nothing of *parts* of the Bible, or of books whose *place* is uncertain, we know of at least *twenty* different *editions* of the *whole* Latin Bible printed in *Germany only* before Luther was born. These had issued from Augsburg, Strasburg, Cologne, Ulm, Mentz (two), Basle (four), Nuremberg (ten); and were dispersed through Germany, I repeat, before Luther was born; and I may remark that before that event there was a printing press at work in this very town of Erfurth, where more than twenty years after he is said to have made his 'discovery.' Some may ask what the Pope was about all this time? Truly, one would think he must have been off his guard; but as to these German performances, he might have found employment nearer home, if he had looked for it. Before Luther was born, the Bible was printed in Rome, and the printers had had the assurance to memorialize his Holiness, praying that he would help them off with some copies. It had been printed, too, at Naples, Florence, and Placenza; and Venice alone had furnished eleven editions. No doubt we should be within the truth, if we were to say that, besides the multitude of manuscript copies, not yet fallen into disuse, the *press* had issued fifty different editions of the whole Latin Bible; to say nothing of Psalters, New Testaments, or other parts. And yet, more than twenty years after, we find a young man who had received 'a very liberal education,' who 'had made great proficiency in his studies at Magdeburg, Eisenach, and Erfurth,' and who, nevertheless, did not know what a Bible was, simply because 'the Bible was unknown in those days!'"\*

D'Aubigné in the course of his history repeatedly quotes Seckendorf, the biographer and great admirer of Luther. Did he never chance to read in the first book of this writer's "Commentaries on Lutheranism," a passage in which he states, that three distinct editions of the Bible, *translated into German*, were published at Wittenberg, in 1470, 1483, and 1490: one of them thirteen years before the birth of Luther, another in the very year of his birth, and a third seven years thereafter?† And all these in the immediate vicinity of Luther's birth place; not to mention another edition, which the same author assures us,‡ was published not far distant,—at Augsburg, in 1518, just one year after Luther

---

\* The Dark Ages, etc. Maitland. P. 469, note.

† Commentarii in Luther. Lib. 1, sec. 51. § cxxv, p. 204. Quoted by Audin, p. 216.

‡ Ibid.

had turned reformer, and twelve years before he published the last portion of his own German version of the Bible! How could D'Aubigné avoid seeing this passage in his own favorite historian: and if he saw it, what are we to think of his honesty in wholly concealing the fact, and even in stating what is plainly contradicted by it—that “the Bible was then an unknown book,” and that Luther never saw it till his twentieth year? Menzel, far more honest than D'Aubigné, tells us expressly that “before the time of Luther the Bible had already been translated and *printed* in both High and Low Dutch.”\*

The Bible then an unknown book! Who preserved this book during the previous fifteen hundred years? From whom did the reformers receive it? Who kept it safe through all dangers; in the midst of conflagrations, wars, and the destructive torrents of barbarian incursion? Who copied it over and again, before the art of printing? The Roman Catholic Church did all this: and yet flippant or dishonest writers still accuse her of having concealed this book of life from the people! But for her patient labor, vigilant watchfulness, and maternal solicitude, the Bible might have perished with thousands of other books: and still she was an enemy of this good book, and wished to keep it hidden under a bushel! She had choice selections from it read to her people on every Sunday and festival of the year, even according to the enforced avowal of our unscrupulous and romantic historian of the Reformation; still she wished to conceal this treasure from the people! A curious way of concealing it, truly!

But, perhaps, she preserved it in the Latin tongue only, and was opposed to its general circulation in the living languages of Europe. She did no such thing, as we shall presently see; though even had she done this, she would not have concealed the Bible from the people. The Latin language continued to be that which was most generally understood, and even

---

\* History of Germany, vol. ii, p. 223.

spoken in Europe, until the reign of Charlemagne, in the beginning of the ninth century: and even for several centuries afterwards, while the modern languages were struggling into form, it was more or less generally known, and was not, properly speaking, a dead language. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, and for a long time afterwards, it was the only language of literature, of theology, of medicine, and of legislation. Most of the modern languages of Europe were formed from it, and were so similar to it both in words and in general structure, that the common people of Italy, Spain, Portugal, and even France, could understand the mother tongue without great difficulty. In Hungary, it had been the common language of the people since the days of king Stephen, in the latter part of the tenth century. It was, moreover, taught and studied in every school and college of Christendom, and it was the medium through which most other branches were taught. It was, then, at the time of the Reformation, a language which was very commonly understood in Europe. Therefore, even if the Catholic Church had given the Bible to the people only in the Latin Vulgate, she would not have concealed it: nor would it have remained "an unknown book." It is a notorious fact, that one of the first books published after the invention of the art of printing, was the Latin Bible.\*

The learned Protestant bibliographer, Dibdin, thus speaks of the earlier printed editions of the Latin Bible:

"From the year 1462, to the end of the fifteenth century, the editions of the Latin Bible may be considered literally innumerable; and generally speaking only repetitions of the same text."†

---

\* Hallam proves, or believes that he proves, that it was the first book printed, probably in the year 1455. — "History of Literature," sup. cit. vol. i, p. 96.

† The Library Companion, or the young man's Guide and the old man's Comfort in the choice of a Library. By Rev. T. F. Dibdin, M. A., F. R. S., Member of the Academy of Rouen and Utrecht. Second edition, London, 1825. Octavo, pages 899. P. 15.

Among the more ancient and valuable editions of the Latin version, he enumerates the following :

"As thus ; at Mentz, in 1455 ; at Bamberg, 1461 ; at Rome, 1471 ; Venice, 1476 ; Naples, 1476 ; in Bohemia, 1488 ; in Poland, 1563 ; in Iceland, 1551 ; in Russia, 1581 ; in Franca, 1475 ; in Holland, 1477 ; in England, 1535 ; in Spain, 1477."\*

But it is a well ascertained fact, that long before the Reformation of Luther, the people of almost every country in Europe had the Bible already translated into their own vernacular tongues. In most nations, there was not only one, but there were even many different versions.

We begin with Germany, the theater of the Reformation. We have already seen the testimony of Seckendorf and of Menzel on this subject. The Germans had no less than *five* different translations of the Scriptures into their own language ; of which three were previous to that of Luther in 1530 ;† and two were contemporary with, or immediately subsequent to it. The oldest was that made by Ulphilas, Bishop of the Mæso-Goths (now Wallachians), as early as the middle of the fourth century.‡ This version seems to have been used for several centuries by many of the older Gothic and German Christians. The second version was that ascribed to Charlemagne (beginning of ninth century)—probably because it was made by some learned man under his direction. It was in the old German, or Teutonic dialect. Besides, there was a very old rhythmical paraphrase of the four gospels, much used in Germany from the time of the first emperor Louis.§

The third German version was a translation from the Latin

\* The Library Companion, etc., Dibdin, sup. cit. P. 16, note. This work is found in the valuable collection of Very Rev. E. T. Collins, of Cincinnati, to whom we are indebted for several authorities alleged in these pages.

† Luther's translation was completed in this year ; it was commenced about eight years previously.—See for all the facts and dates, Audin, 215–6, note.

‡ See Horne's Introduction, vol. ii, p. 240–5.

§ This was as early as the middle of the ninth century.

Vulgate by some person unknown, an edition of which was printed as early as the year 1466: two copies of this edition are still preserved in the senatorial library at Leipsic. Before the appearance of the German Bible of Luther, the version last named had been republished in Germany at least *sixteen times*: once at Strasburg, five times at Nuremberg, and ten times at Augsburg. These various editions often claimed to be new versions, in consequence of the improvements they professed to have introduced into the original version of 1466. This was particularly the case with the edition published at Augsburg in 1477, and also with that of Nuremberg in 1483, which latter was embellished with numerous wood-cuts.

Thus, before the publication of Luther's translation, there had already appeared in Germany no less than three distinct versions of the whole Bible, the last of which had passed through at least seventeen different editions. Add to these the three editions of Wittenberg, mentioned by Seckendorf above, and not included in this estimate, and we ascertain that the Bible had already been reprinted in the German language no less than *twenty times*, before Luther's appeared.\*

In 1534, John Dietenberg published his new German translation from the Latin Vulgate at Mayence, under the auspices of the archbishop and elector; Albert. It passed through upwards of *twenty* editions in the course of a hundred years, four of which appeared at Mayence, and seven-

---

\* See Le Long, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, I, 354, seqq. Edit. Paris, 1723; also, David Clement, the Calvinist Librarian of Prussia, *Bibliothèque Curieuse*, 9 vols. 4to, Gottingen, 1750; and second No. of the Dublin Review.

Besides the German Editions indicated in the text, we have since discovered at least *seven* more, mentioned by Joseph Kehrein, in his *Zur Geschichte, or Supplementary History of the German Translations of the Bible before Luther's*: he quotes Panzer, an unquestionable authority. These editions are as follows: two at Cologne, in 1470, and 1480; one at Lubeck, 1494; one at Haberstadt, 1522; one at Mayence, 1517; one (additional) at Strasbourg; and one at Basle, in 1517. Two of these old Editions may be seen in the West: one in the library of Bishop Luers, Fort Wayne—that of Nuremberg, 1470; and the other in that of Father Collins, Cincinnati—of Cologne, 1470. They are both beautiful specimens, and richly illustrated.

See also, the 61st Catalogue of C. H. Beschen, Noordlinger, 1860.

teen at Cologne. The style of it was somewhat unpolished, but it was generally esteemed as a faithful translation. In 1537, another Catholic version appeared under the supervision of Doctors Emser and Eck, the two learned champions of Catholicity against Luther. This version likewise passed through many editions.

While on the subject of German Bibles, we may here remark, though it does not come exactly within our present plan, that Gaspar Ulenberg published a new version in 1630; and that during the last forty years, several other new versions have appeared in Catholic Germany, of which those of Schwartzel and Brentano are the most popular.

The facts already stated clearly prove how utterly unfounded, and how recklessly false is the statement of D'Aubigné, that before the Reformation "the Bible was an unknown book!" They demonstrate triumphantly, that the Catholics of Germany were even more zealous in the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, than were the self-styled reformers, notwithstanding all the loud boastings of the latter and of their friends on the subject.

But we will pursue this line of argument still further, and prove, on the unquestionable authorities referred to above, that other Catholic countries were not behind Germany in the sincere will to translate the Scriptures into the vernacular tongues, and to circulate them among the people. In fact, there is not a country in Europe in which the Bible had not been repeatedly translated and published long before the Reformation.

In Italy, there were two versions anterior to that of Luther: that by the Dominican, Jacobus à Voragine, archbishop of Genoa, which version, according to the testimony of Sixtus Senensis,\* was completed as early as 1290; and that by Nicholas Malermi, a Camaldolese monk, which was first printed simultaneously at Rome and Venice, in the year

---

\* *Bibliotheca sacra*, tom. i, p. 397.



1471, and which had passed through as many as *thirteen* different editions before the year 1525. This translation was afterwards reprinted *eight* times before the year 1567, with the express permission of the *Santo Uffizio*, or Holy Office at Rome. Almost simultaneously with that of Luther, there likewise appeared two other Italian translations of the Bible: that by Antonio Bruccioli\* in 1532, which in twenty years passed through *ten* editions; and that by Santes Marmochino, which was successively printed at Venice in 1538, 1546, and 1547.

The oldest French version of the Bible was that by Des Moulins whose Bible History—almost a complete translation of the Bible—appeared, according to Usher, about the year 1478. A new edition of it, corrected by Rely, bishop of Angers, was published in 1487, and was successively reprinted *sixteen* different times before the year 1546: four of these editions appearing at Lyons, and twelve at Paris. In 1512, Le Fevre published a new French translation, which passed through many editions. A revision of this version was made by the divines of Louvain, in 1550, and was subsequently reprinted in France and Flanders, *thirty-nine* times before the year 1700.† More recently, a great variety of new Catholic versions have appeared in France; of which those by De Sacy, Corbin, Amelotte, Maralles, Godeau, and Huré, are the most celebrated.

According to Mariana, the great Spanish historian, the Scriptures were translated into Castilian by order of Alphonso, the Wise. The whole Bible was translated into the Valencian dialect of the Spanish, in the year 1405, by Boniface Ferrer, brother of St. Vincent Ferrer. This version was printed in 1478, and reprinted in 1515, *with the formal con-*

---

\* It is but fair to say, that this version was deemed inaccurate, and was subsequently suppressed by the competent authorities, with the consent of the author. Marmochino corrected its faults.

† It is thus a mistake to suppose, as Ranké and others seem to do, that Le Fevre was the author of the first French translation of the Bible.

*sent of the Spanish Inquisition.* In 1512, the Epistles and Gospels were translated into Spanish by Ambrosio de Montesma. This work was republished at Antwerp in 1544, at Barcelona in 1601 and 1608, and at Madrid in 1603 and 1615.

In England, besides the translation made by the venerable Bede in the eighth century, and that of the Psalms ascribed to Alfred the Great,\* in the ninth, there was also another translation of the whole Bible into the English of that early period, which was completed about the year 1290—long before the version of Wickliffe in the fifteenth century.

In the year 706, Adhelm, first bishop of Salisbury, according to the testimony of the Protestant biblicist Horn, translated the Psalter into Saxon. At his persuasion, Egbert, bishop of Lindisfarne, also translated the four gospels. In the fourteenth century, a new English version of the whole Bible was made by John de Trevisa. In the year 905, Elfric, archbishop of Canterbury, translated into English the Pentateuch, Joshua, Job, the Judges, Ruth, part of the books of Kings, Esther, and the Maccabees.†

The Bible was translated into Flemish, as Usher‡ admits, by Jacobus Merland, before the year 1210. This version was printed at Cologne in 1475, and it passed through *seven* new editions before the appearance of Luther's Bible in 1530. The Antwerp edition was republished *eight* times in the short space of seventeen years. Within thirty years there were also published, at Antwerp alone, no less than *ten* editions of the New Testament translated by Cornelius Kendrick in 1524. In the course of the seventeenth century, there also appeared in Flanders several new Catholic versions by De Wit, Laemput, Schum, and others. All these were repeatedly re-published..

---

\* The venerable Bede died in 735, immediately after having finished his translation of St. John's Gospel, which seems to have completed his version of the Scriptures.

† Cf. Archbishop Kenrick's *Theologia Dogmatica*, vol. i, p. 426.

‡ A learned Protestant historian, especially in regard to dates.

A Slavonian version of the Bible was published at Cracow, in the beginning of the sixteenth century. As early as the fourteenth century the Bible had been translated into Swedish, by the direction of St. Bridget. According to the testimony of Jonas Arnagrimus, a disciple of the distinguished Tycho Brahe, a translation of the Bible was made in Iceland, as early as 1279. A Bohemian Bible appeared at Prague in 1488, and passed through three other different editions; at Cutna in 1498, and at Venice in 1506 and 1511.

Finally, to complete this hasty summary of bibliographical facts, we may here state, as an evidence of the solicitude of Rome for the dissemination of the Bible, that many editions of Syriac and Arabic Bibles have been printed at Rome and Venice for the use of the oriental churches in communion with the Holy See. A translation of the Bible into Ethiopic was published at Rome, as early as 1548. The famous convent of Armenian monks, called *Mechiteristi*, at Venice, so often visited by travelers, has more recently published exquisitely beautiful versions of the Bible translated into Armenian.

From this mass of facts—and we have not given all which might be alleged on the subject—it clearly appears that the Catholic Church had exhibited a most commendable zeal for the dissemination of the Scriptures among the people, long before the Reformation had been so much as heard of. This evidence of stubborn facts demonstrates how very silly are the assertions of those Protestant writers who, with D'Aubigné, would fain persuade the world that we are indebted to the Reformation for the knowledge and general circulation of the Scriptures. And yet prejudice or drivelling ignorance will probably still continue to re-echo this unfounded assertion. So tenaciously do men cling to the tales of the nursery, and persist in obstinately believing, against all evidence, whatever is flattering to pride or prejudice!

Thus, before the appearance of Luther's version, in 1530, there had existed in the different countries of Europe at least *twenty-two* different Catholic versions, which, during the sev-

enty years intervening between 1460 and 1530, had passed through at least SEVENTY editions:—or one for each year! And, simultaneously with Luther's German Bible, there appeared a great number of Catholic versions, all of which, as well as those previously in existence, were frequently reprinted. And yet, in the face of all these facts, we are still to be told that the Catholic Church concealed the Bible from the people!

While on this subject, we may as well also remark that, of the four famous Polyglot Bibles, the three most ancient were published by Catholics. That by Cardinal Ximenes was published at Alcala in Spain, in six volumes, folio, in the year 1515—two years before the commencement of the Reformation. That of Antwerp was published in 1572, and that of Paris in 1645; while the latest of all, and the only Protestant one, was published by Walton, in London, only in the year 1658!

We say nothing of another Polyglot edition of the Psalms, by Giustiniani, an Italian, who seems to have been the first to conceive this splendid idea of illustrating the Scriptures by exhibiting, in parallel columns, the original Hebrew and Greek, with the most ancient and esteemed versions. His labor was, however, never destined to see the light; his manuscripts were lost in a shipwreck near Leghorn; and it was reserved to the magnificent Ximenes to be the first to carry out this great conception. He devoted many of the last years of his brilliant life to this great work. Valuable manuscripts in Greek and Hebrew were procured in remote places, and at immense expense: Ximenes himself collated these precious documents with the assistance of a body of learned men; and he finally put the finishing hand to his herculean labor. To him are we indebted for the first great impulse thus given to biblical criticism and literature.

It is also worthy of remark, that a learned Italian, Bernardo di Rossi, towards the close of the last century, by his single, unaided efforts, collected together more valuable ancient

Greek, and especially Hebrew, manuscripts of the Bible, than Walton had been able to do, with his immense resources and the co-operation of the British and of other governments.\*

It is also proper to state that, besides the version of the Bible into the vernacular tongues of Europe, referred to above, there were, about the time of the Reformation, various Latin versions made by Catholics immediately from the original Hebrew and Greek texts. These were entirely distinct from the Latin Vulgate of St. Jerome. The most famous were:—that by Santes Pagninus, published at Florence and Lyons in 1528, which was a translation from the Hebrew; and that of the Old Testament by Cardinal Cajetan, which was a literal translation from the Septuagint.† It is also well known that Leo X., in order to promote biblical learning, encouraged the study of Greek and Hebrew at the very dawn of the Reformation, and before the reformers had done any thing of the kind.‡

Thus every department of biblical study was fully and extensively cultivated by the Catholic Church, both before and after the commencement of the Reformation. Catholic divines labored at least as much, and as successfully, in these studies, as did the reformers, and at a much more early period. Europe was filled with Bibles in almost every language, and especially in the Latin Vulgate and in the vernacular tongues.

With all these undoubted facts before us, we will now be better able to form a correct judgment on the truth of the statement made by Martin Luther himself in his Table Talk.

“Thirty years ago the Bible was an unknown book: the Prophets were not understood; it was thought that they could not be translated. I was

\* See Geddes' "Prospectus for a new Translation," etc., 4to. Also the works of Bernardo di Rossi, who died a few years ago.

† Geddes, *ibid.*

‡ This was but one of the many acts of the brilliant Pontiff, who ushered in the second Augustan age of literature.—See Roscoe.

twenty years old before I saw the Scriptures: I thought that there was no other Gospel, no other Epistles than those contained in the Postilla.”\*

The arch-reformer must either have been wondrously ignorant of what was everywhere passing around him in the world, or he must have wilfully misstated the facts of the case. His character for knowledge, or for veracity, must suffer terribly; there is no alternative. We suspect, however, that, like his admirer D'Aubigné, he was not very particular about the truth, when a misstatement would better serve his purpose.

But we are still told that Catholics did not read the Bible, that they were even prohibited to do so, before the Reformation.—Who then, we would ask, purchased and read those SEVENTY EDITIONS of the Bible in the vernacular tongues, which, as we have seen, were published before Luther had circulated one copy of his German Bible? Were they read only by the priests?—But these all knew Latin, and had their Latin Bibles. Think you that booksellers would have published so many editions of a book, which was not readily sold and extensively read? Would a new edition have been necessary each successive year, during the seventy which preceded the appearance of Luther's Bible, unless each edition, as it appeared, had been eagerly sought and rapidly bought up? Would any of our modern book publishers reprint seventy successive yearly editions of a work, which was not generally read?

But there was a prohibition by the Church to read the Bible.—When, where, and by whom was that prohibition made? The annals of history are wholly silent as to any restriction of the kind having been made, before the flagrant abuses of the Bible by the reformers and their disciples seemed to require some such regulation. The Church had, indeed, carefully guarded against the circulation of erroneous or inaccurate editions; and the suppression of the Italian

---

\* Tisch-Reden, or Table Talk, p. 352, edit. Eisleben. Apud Audin, p. 390, 391.

version by Bruccioli is an evidence of this wise solicitude. But we nowhere find evidence of any restrictive law as to the reading of the Bible in the vernacular versions, until after the council of Trent had closed its sessions in 1563.

A committee of learned divines, named by the council, then drew up a list, or Index, of prohibited books, prefaced by ten general regulations on the reading of them. The fourth rule of the Index permits the reading "of the Bible translated into the vulgar tongues by Catholic authors, to those only to whom the bishop or the inquisitor, with the advice of the parish priests or confessors, shall judge that such reading will prove more profitable unto an increase of faith and piety, than injurious:" and it assigns, as a reason for this restriction, "that experience had made it manifest, that the permission to read the Bible indiscriminately in the vulgar tongues had, *from the rashness of men*, done more harm than good."\*

Some such regulation of discipline was deemed salutary and even necessary, at a time when, the landmarks of the ancient faith having been recklessly removed, the Bible was wantonly perverted to support a hundred contradictory systems. In that period of religious vertigo, men, "having an appearance indeed of piety, but denying the power thereof," were "always learning, and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth:"† "according to their own devices, they heaped up to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they turned away their hearing from the truth, and were turned to fables:"‡ they "were like children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, in the wickedness of men, in craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive:"§ and not understanding that in the Scriptures "are some things hard to be understood," they "wrested them to their own per-

---

\* "Cum experimento manifestum sit, si sacra biblia vulgari lingua passim sine discrimine permittantur, plus inde, ob hominum temeritatem, detrimenti quam utilitatis oriri." Regula IV.

† 2 Tim., iii : 5-7.

‡ Ibid., iv : 3, 4.

§ Ephes., iv : 14.

dition.”\* In this emergency, when the very substance of the faith was endangered, did it not behoove the Church, “which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth,”† to raise her warning voice, and to proclaim from the chair of Peter, with St. Peter himself, that all should “understand this *first*, that no prophecy of the Scripture is made *by private interpretation* ;”‡ and to re-echo through the religious world, thus shaken to its very base, the solemn command of Christ “to hear the Church,” under the penalty of being reckoned “with heathens and publicans ?”§

This is precisely what the Church did; and she thought that she was compelled to adopt this course by the glaring evils wrought through the working of the newly broached principle of private interpretation. The “rashness of men” perverting the Scriptures of God to their own perdition, was the cause of her enactment, restricting the reading of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongues. The principle of private interpretation, applied to the Scriptures, had evidently “done more harm than good;” for, whereas the Bible manifestly contains and teaches but one religion, this principle had already extracted from it a hundred contradictory religions. So that the Reformation is alone to be blamed for this restrictive policy on the part of the Catholic Church; and Protestants should be the last persons in the world to reproach to her as a fault, what the “rashness” alone of their fathers in the faith occasioned, and even rendered necessary.

But the enactment in question, besides not emanating directly from the council itself—having been made after the council had closed its sessions—contained a merely disciplinary regulation of a temporary character, which was not everywhere received in practice,|| and which has long since ceased

---

\* 2 Peter, iii : 6.

† 1 Timothy, iii : 15.

‡ 2 Peter, i : 20.

§ St. Matthew, xviii : 17. .

|| “Sed ea disciplina non ubique obtinuit.”—Archbishop Kenrick, *Theol. Dogmatica*, vol. i, p. 429. In this learned and excellent work will be found many valuable facts, of which we have already availed ourselves, and on which we shall occasionally draw in the sequel.



to be of binding force in any part of the Catholic Church. The present discipline requires only, "that the version be approved, and illustrated by commentaries from the fathers and other Catholic writers."\* Pope Pius VI., in a letter† to Anthony Martini, the translator of the Italian version, now generally used in Italy, praises him for his undertaking, and adds:

"For these (the Scriptures) are the most abundant sources, *which ought to be left open to every one*, to draw from them purity of morals and of doctrine."‡

It is, then, plainly a slander to assert that the Catholic Church forbids the reading of the Scriptures. In the United States, Catholics have published at least as many editions of the Bible as any Protestant sect. These have appeared in every form, from Haydock's splendid folio Bible, in two volumes—an edition unequaled by any Protestant Bible in the country—down to the octavo and duodecimo editions.§ Several of these have been stereotyped: and they may be had in every Catholic book store in the country, and may be found in most Catholic families. In France, the great Bossuet distributed himself no less than fifty thousand copies of the New Testament translated into French by Amelotte.||

In speaking of the influence of the Reformation on biblical learning, we must say a few words on the different Protestant versions. These are as numerous, and almost as various, as the sects from which they have respectively emanated. The oldest is that of Luther, in which, as soon as it successively appeared, the learned Emser detected no less than a thousand glaring faults! Luther became angry, and raged at this ex-

\* Archbishop Kenrick, *Theol. Dogmatica*, vol. i, p. 429.

† Written April 1, 1778. ‡ Inserted in frontispiece of the Douay Bible.

§ We here refer to the old edition of Haydock. The new one recently published by Dunigan of New York, in one large volume, is the most complete and beautiful Bible we have ever seen in English. It is, in every respect, superior to the illustrated edition of the Harpers.

|| Robelot, *Influence*, etc., p. 389.

posure of his work by his learned antagonist, on whom he exhausted his usual vocabulary of abusive epithets. He said, among other pretty things, that "these Popish asses were not able to appreciate his labors."\* Yet even Seckendorf gives us to understand that, in his cooler moments, the reformer availed himself of Emser's corrections, and made many changes in his version.†

Still, however, Martin Bucer, a brother reformer, says that "his falls in translating and explaining the Scriptures were manifest and not a few."‡ Zuingle, another leading reformer, after having examined his translation, openly pronounced it a corruption of the word of God.§ It has now grown almost obsolete, even in Germany itself. It is viewed as faulty and insufficient in many respects. In 1836, many Lutheran consistories called for its entire revision.||

It would not be difficult to show that the translations made by the other leading reformers were not more unexceptionable. Luther returned with interest the compliment which Zuingle had paid to his Bible.

"Ecolampadius and the theologians of Basle made another version; but, according to the famous Beza, it was impious in many parts: the divines of Basle said the same of Beza's version. In fact, adds Dumoulin, another learned minister, 'he changes in it the text of Scripture;' and speaking

\* Seckendorf, Comm., l. i, sect. 52, § cxxvii, p. 210. † Ibid., § cxxii.

‡ "Lutheri lapsus in vertendis et explanandis Scripturis manifestos esse et non paucos."—Bucer, Dial. contra Melancthon.

§ See Amicable Discussion, by Bishop Trevern, i, 129, note.

|| See Audin, p. 215, for many authorities on this subject. Of Luther's version, Mr. Hallam says: "The translation of the Old and New Testament by Luther is more renowned for the purity of its German idiom, than for its adherence to the original text. Simon has charged him with ignorance of Hebrew; and when we consider how late he came to the knowledge of that or the Greek language, and the multiplicity of his employments, it may be believed that his knowledge of them was far from extensive."—Hist. Literat., i, 201. And in a note (ibid.) he says: "It has been as ill spoken of among Calvinists as by the Catholics themselves. St. Aldegonde says it is further from the Hebrew than any he knows."—See Gerdes Hist. Ref. Evang., iii, 60.

of Calvin's translation, he says that 'Calvin does violence to the letter of the gospel, which he has changed, making also additions of his own.' The ministers of Geneva believed themselves obliged to make an exact version; but James I., king of England, in his conference at Hampton Court, declared that, of all the versions, it was the most wicked and unfaithful.\*

It is very difficult for men who have their own peculiar religious notions to subserve, to translate fairly the sacred text. An example of this is found in the manifestly sectarian rendering of the words *baptism* and *baptize*, by *immersion* and *immerse*, in the New Testament translated by George Campbell, James McKnight, and Philip Doddridge, and now more or less extensively used by the Reformers or Campbellites. We say nothing here of the gross perversion of the last verse of St. Matthew's Gospel, in this version.†

The version of King James, on its first appearance in England, was openly decried by the Protestant ministers, as abounding in gross perversions of the original text.‡ The necessity of this new translation was predicated on the noto-

\* Bishop Trevern. *Amic. Discussion*, i, 127, note.

† Even this version does not, however, seem to satisfy the prurient taste for change nourished by these new religionists, who in conjunction with the Baptists are now busily engaged in what is called the revision movement. An animated and interesting controversy has thence arisen between them and the other Protestant sects in regard to the fidelity of the received version of King James, the numerous faults of which are unsparingly censured by the advocates of the new version. Thus, after boasting of the Bible as their only rule of faith for three centuries, the Protestants of the United States are not yet satisfied on the great question, whether they really have a faithful version of the written word! This would be comical enough, were it not so very sad. Alas! they are, "like little children, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine." Oh! that they would return to the bosom of the loving mother against whom their fathers so unhappily rebelled! She would receive them, and all dissension would cease in her harmonious household.

‡ After speaking rather disparagingly of the English style of King James' version, Mr. Hallam very cautiously abstains from venturing an opinion on its fidelity:

"On the more important question, whether this translation is entirely, or with very trifling exceptions, conformable to the original text, it seems unfit

rious corruptions of the sacred text by all the Protestant versions in England during the previous seventy years. The chief of these were: Tyndale's, Mathews', Cranmer's, and the bishops' Bible.\* Here, then, is an open avowal, that during all this time, when Protestantism was in its palmyest days in England, it had not yet offered to the people the pure word of God!

And, as we have just seen, King James' version did not much mend the matter. It was however repeatedly corrected: but even in its amended form, as now used by most English and American Protestants, it still abounds with grievous faults. Mr. Ward, in his *Errata*, has pointed out a great number of these:—though candor compels us to avow, that this writer is not always judicious in his criticism, and that he frequently insists too much on mere trifles. Archbishop Kenrick, in his *Theology*, proves by a reference to the original text, as edited even by Protestants, that the modern English version still retains at least five or six grievous perversions of the text, in matters too, affecting doctrine.†

The English Douay version, which is in general use among English and American Catholics, is a translation from the Latin Vulgate, which was rendered from the original Hebrew and revised from the original Greek by St. Jerome, towards

---

to enter. It is one which is seldom discussed with all the temper and freedom from oblique views which the subject demands, and upon which, for this reason, it is not safe for those who have not had leisure or means to examine for themselves, to take upon trust the testimony of the learned."—*Hist. Literat.*, sup. cit., vol. ii, p. 59. This silence is ominous in so learned an English Protestant.

\* For an account of these see Hallam.—*Hist. Lit.*, vol. i, p. 201.

† *Theologia Dogmatica*, vol. i, p. 427, seqq. Among these perversions, the most glaring are these; Matth., xix: 11th, "All men *can not receive* this saying," for "*receive not*"—Greek, χωροῦσι: 1 Corinth., vii: 9. "If they *can not contain*," for *do not contain*—Gr., ἐγκρατεύονται; 1 Cor., ix: 5. "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife," for a woman, a sister.—Gr., ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα; 1 Cor., xi: 27. "Eat this bread *and* drink," etc., for *or* drink—Gr., ἢ, etc., etc.

the close of the fourth century. Dating from a time preceding by centuries the religious prejudices which have influenced Christians for the last three hundred years, the Vulgate is deservedly esteemed for its accuracy and impartiality, even by learned and intelligent Protestant writers. St. Jerome, moreover, had access to many valuable manuscripts which have since perished. Since his time the Hebrew has undergone a revolution, by the introduction of the Massoretic points to supply the place of vowels, which were wanting in the original Hebrew language.

The distinguished Protestant biblical critic, George Campbell, states these advantages of St. Jerome's position, and fully admits their force.\* He also says of this ancient version: "The Vulgate may be pronounced on the whole a good and faithful version."† Another famous modern Protestant writer on biblical studies, says of it: "It is allowed to be in general a faithful translation, and sometimes exhibits the sense of Scripture with greater accuracy than the more modern versions. . . . The Latin Vulgate preserves many true readings, where the modern Hebrew copies are corrupted."‡ A writer, whose biblical "Institutes" are often used as a text book in this country, says: "It is in general skillful and faithful, and often gives the sense of Scripture better than modern versions."§

Thus Protestants did not after all, even according to their own showing, make much of a reformation in the Bible, when they departed from that "faithful" translation,—the old Latin Vulgate, and gave us in its place their many crude or grossly faulty versions of the Bible. But did they succeed better in expounding, than they had succeeded in translating the Bible? They have been at least prolific enough in this depart-

---

\* Dissert., tom. x, p. 354, Amer. edit., apud Archbishop Kenrick.—Theol. Dog., i, p. 424.

† Ibid., p. 358, apud eundem.

‡ Horne's Introduction, vol. ii, part i, ch. v, § 1, p. 281, 202. Apud Archbishop Kenrick, *ibid.*, p. 423.

§ Gerard, Institutes of Biblical Criticism. § iv, p. 269–70. Apud eund., *ibid.*

ment, having given us almost as many interpretations as they have heads. We could scarcely have asked for more variety!

Nor is the work of *improvement* on the previously ascertained meanings of the Bible yet completed: almost every day we hear of learned and intelligent preachers among Protestants striking new systems out of this good book!\* One,† by a new method calculates to a nicety the very year and day when all prophecy is to be fulfilled, and the world is to come to a final end: another,‡ pretending that all Protestant sects have hitherto been in the dark as to the real meaning of the Bible, proposes that all creeds and commentaries be cast to the winds, and that every one hereafter explain it simply as it reads:—that is, as he *thinks* it reads! This last system, though it is clearly based on the original Protestant principle of private interpretation, to the exclusion of all church authority, is, for this very reason, one eminently calculated to multiply sects, and to render confusion even worse confounded.

Let us see, in conclusion, what has been the practical operation of this principle of private interpretation, and what the general influence of the Reformation on biblical studies in Germany, the father-land, and first theater of Protestantism. Has it been salutary or injurious? It requires but little acquaintance with the present condition of German Protestantism, to be able to pronounce on its true character and real tendency. Rationalism is there in the ascendant. This system, which is little better than downright Deism, has frittered away the very substance of Christianity. The inspiration of the Bible itself, the integrity of its canon, the truth of its numerous and clearly attested miracles, the divinity and even the resurrection of Christ, and the existence of grace, and of everything supernatural in religion; have all fallen before the Juggernaut-car like of modern German Protestant *exegetis*—or system of interpretation! The Rationalists of Ger-

---

\* These new systems are certainly *out* of the Bible.

† Miller.

‡ Alexander Campbell.

many have left nothing of Christianity, scarcely even its lifeless skeleton! They boldly and unblushingly proclaim their infidel principles, through the press, from the professor's chair, and from the pulpit. And the most learned and distinguished among the present German Protestant clergy have openly embraced this infidel system. Whoever doubts the entire accuracy of this picture of modern German Protestantism, needs only open the works of Semmler, Damon, Paulus, Strauss, Eichorn, Michaelis, Teneubach, Bretschneider, Woltman, and others.

The following extract from the sermons of the Rev. Dr. Rose, a learned divine of the church of England, and "Christian advocate of the university of Cambridge," presents a graphic sketch of these German Rationalists:

"They are bound by no law, but their own fancies; some are more and some are less extravagant; but I do them no injustice after this declaration in saying, that the general inclination and tendency of their opinions (more or less forcibly acted on) is this:—that in the New Testament, we shall find only the *opinions* of Christ and the apostles adapted to the age in which they lived, and not eternal truths; that Christ himself had neither the design nor the power of teaching any system which was to endure; that, when He taught any enduring truth, as He occasionally did, it was without being aware of its nature; that the apostles understood still less of real religion; that the whole doctrine both of Christ and the apostles, as it was directed to the Jews alone, so it was gathered from no other source than the Jewish philosophy; that Christ himself erred (!), and His apostles spread His errors, and that consequently no one of His doctrines is to be received on their authority; but that, without regard to the authority of the books of Scripture, and their asserted divine origin, each doctrine is to be examined according to the principles of right reason, before it is allowed to be divine."

We should be endless were we to attempt to give all the extravagances into which these German Protestant divines have indulged: yet we must give a few of the most glaring. Doctor Paulus, in his Scripture Commentaries, enters into a labored argument to prove that Christ was not really dead, but that he had merely suffered a fainting fit, from which he was recovered by the admission of fresh air into his sepulchre! He moves heaven and earth to prove, that no instance is on



record of a man dying on a cross in three hours!! He indulges in similar absurdities about the resurrection of Lazarus!

When Christ is said to have walked on the sea, it is no miracle at all, says Doctor Paulus: for the Greek word *may* mean only that he walked *by* the sea, or simply that he *swam*: and St. Peter's having been on the point of drowning, resulted merely from the not extraordinary circumstance that he was not so expert a swimmer as Christ! Most of the cures spoken of in the Gospel, the Rationalists explain by the superior skill in medicine, which, *they have ascertained*, our Saviour learned during His infancy, while an exile in Egypt; or they account for them by Dr. Mesmer's wonderful system of animal magnetism!

According to them, St. John did not really write the Gospel ascribed to him; and as for the other three Gospels, they are merely a clumsy compilation from a previous common record, the existence of which they have detected, and which they assert was written in the Aramaic language! This astonishing discovery, first made by the learned Michaelis, was improved on by Berthold and others, who maintained that not only the Gospels, but the Epistles of St. Paul, and the other Epistles also, are mere faulty translations from the original Aramaic! Thus, "instead of the good old-fashioned notion, that the New Testament is a collection of works composed by the persons whose names they bear, and who wrote under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, we must now believe, that the original narrator of the Gospel History was an unknown person; and that the Gospels and Epistles are merely translations made by some persons whose names are lost, and who betray themselves by several blunders in the work which they undertook."\*—At least all these explanations are *natural* enough: and those who maintain them, accordingly style themselves *naturalists*, as well as Rationalists.†

---

\* British Critic, July, 1828. See also Dr. Pusey's "Historical Inquiry;" and also Moore's "Travels of an Irish Gentleman," etc., p. 186, seqq., where this whole subject is ably and fully elucidated.

† In viewing these extraordinary and almost incredible developments of  
VOL. I.—27



Such then are the effects, present and palpable, of the Reformation on the biblical literature of Germany! The Reformation began by vaunting its zeal for the Bible: it has ended, in the very place of its birth, by rejecting the Bible, and by blaspheming Christ and His holy religion.

Its results have not been more favorable to Christianity in Geneva, another great center of the Reformation, and another radiating point of the new gospel. Hear what the Protestant writer Grenus says on this subject:

"The ministers of Geneva have already passed the unchangeable barrier. They have held out the hand of fellowship to deists and to the enemies of the faith. They even blush to make mention, in their catechisms, of original sin, without which the incarnation of the Eternal Word is no longer necessary. 'When asked,' says Rousseau, 'if Jesus Christ is God, they do not dare to answer. When asked, what mysteries they admit, they still do not dare to answer. . . . A philosopher casts on them a rapid glance, and penetrates them at once—he sees they are Arians, Socinians.'"<sup>†</sup>

He wrote from personal observation, made during a residence in Geneva. Recent travelers have confirmed his statement.

The following epigram would seem to express pretty accurately the confession of faith adopted by modern German Protestants.

"We now reject each mystic creed,  
To common sense a scandal;  
We're more enlightened—yes indeed,  
The devil holds the candle!"

If Luther may be credited, Satan "held the candle" at the very birth of the Reformation; and we see no reason why he should not hold it at the funeral of German Protestantism! If he presided at the baptism of the mother, why should he not assist at the funeral of the daughter?

---

the principle of private judgment, we are forcibly reminded of what St. Paul writes of the ancient philosophers, that they "became vain in their thoughts," and "thinking themselves wise, became fools." The sad aberrations of these learned German bibliomaniacs furnish palpable evidence of the absolute necessity of a divinely appointed guide in religious matters.

<sup>†</sup> "Lettres de la Montagne."

# PART IV.

---

## INFLUENCE

### OF THE

## REFORMATION ON SOCIETY.

### CHAPTER XII.

#### INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

Stating the question—Two aspects—Professions—D'Aubigné's theory—"Combating" *ad libitum*—Diversities and sects—Inconsistency—Early Protestant intolerance—The mother and her recreant daughter—Facts on persecution of each other by early Protestants—Of Karlstadt—Luther the cause of it—Persecution of Anabaptists—Synod at Homburg—Luther's letter—Zuingli—The drowned Jew—Calvinistic intolerance—Persecution of Catholics—Diet of Spires—Name of *Protestant*—A stubborn truth—Strange casuistry—Convention at Smalkalde—Testimony of Menzel—*Cujus Regio, ejus Religio*—Union of church and state—A bear's embrace—Hallam's testimony—Parallel between Catholic and Protestant countries.

WE have seen what was the influence of the boasted Reformation on religion: we are now to examine how it affected the less important interests of this world.

Among these, liberty is the one which is, perhaps, the dearest to the human heart. The very name excites a thrill, and stirs the deepest feelings of the soul. Did the Reformation really promote liberty? Did it break the fetters of political bondage, and especially did it favor freedom of conscience? Were those who came within the range of its influence rendered more free, either religiously or politically, than they had been before? This is the important question which we now proceed to discuss. The question naturally presents two aspects; and we begin with that which is religious, both because this involves higher interests, and because it forms the natural point of transition from the merely religious and

spiritual, to the merely secular and temporal influence of the Reformation.

Religious liberty guaranties to every man the right to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, without thereby incurring any civil penalties or disabilities whatever. Did the Reformation secure this boon, even to its own votaries? We shall see. A summary collection of the facts of history bearing on this important subject will settle the question.

The Reformation indeed boasted much in this particular respect. It professed to free mankind from the degrading yoke of the Papacy, and thereby to restore to them their Christian liberty. Men were told that those who professed the old religion were groaning under a worse than Babylonian captivity, and that they who would rally under the banner of reform would be brought back from exile into the beautiful land of Israel, there to worship in freedom and in peace near the Sion of God! The Pope was Antichrist; the Church was ruthlessly trampled under foot by his followers and especially by his ministers; the liberties of the world were entirely crushed. All men were invited to arise in their strength, to break their chains, and to be free! The restraining influence of Church authority was to be spurned, as wholly incompatible with freedom, and each one was to be guided solely by his own private judgment in matters of religion.

The Germans were told of the grievances they had had to endure in ages past from the court of Rome. Angry passions, once excited by long forgotten controversies between the Germanic empire and the Roman Pontiffs, were called up again from the abyss in which they had slumbered for centuries; and the Germans were implored, in the enticing name of liberty, to break off all connection with Rome forever. In case they would do this, the Reformation promised that they should realize the brightest visions of freedom, and the blessing of true and independent manhood.\*

---

\* Some one has remarked that the Germans remember a grievance of five

Such was the specious theory of the Reformation; such is even at present the boasting speculation of Protestant writers generally. M. Guizot, in his Lectures on Civilization in Modern Europe, asserts, that through the Reformation was brought about "the emancipation of the human mind." According to D'Aubigné, the Catholic Church had utterly destroyed all human liberty:

"But as a besieging army day by day contracts its lines, compelling the garrison to confine their movements within the narrow inclosure of the fortress, and at last obliging it to surrender at discretion, just so the hierarchy, from age to age, and almost from year to year, has gone on restricting the liberty allowed for a time to the human mind, until at last, by successive encroachments, there remained no liberty at all. That which was to be believed, loved, or done, was regulated and decreed in the courts of the Roman chancery. The faithful were relieved from the trouble of examining, reflecting, and combating; all they had to do was to repeat the formularies that had been taught them."\*

This is, to use the softest expression, an absurd exaggeration and a grotesque romance, which has not even the merit of resemblance—or what the French call *vraisemblance*—to the reality of the facts. What! were men then, for fifteen hundred years, mere automata? Did the obedience to the decisions of the Church stifle all rational liberty? Had not Christ enjoined this very obedience on all, under the penalty of being ranked with heathens and publicans?† Did Christ and the apostles leave it free for men to decide, by their private judgment, whether they would receive or reject the doctrines they taught? And in enjoining obedience on all, with the menace of eternal damnation to him that would not

---

hundred years' standing almost as acutely as they do one of yesterday, whenever the memory of the former is revived. If true, this national trait of character may serve to throw some additional light on the excitement which was aroused in Germany by the violent harangues of Luther and his colleagues. The German temperament, though phlegmatic, is sufficiently enthusiastic when once fully aroused to a sense of wrong, whether present or long passed; for the German poetic imagination seems to annihilate time and space.

\* D'Aubigné, vol. iii, p. 237.

† St. Matthew, xviii.

believe,\* did they intend to crush all liberty? Might not our historian, with the very same, if not even with stronger reason, also taunt *their* practice with being inimical to freedom, on the ground that it “relieved the faithful from the trouble of examining, reflecting, and combating?”

In what, in fact, consists the difference between the authoritative teaching of the first body of Christ's ministers—the apostles, and that of the body of pastors who, by divine commission, succeeded them in the office of preaching, teaching, and baptizing, and who, in the discharge of these sacred duties, were promised the divine assistance “all days, even to the consummation of the world?”† And if the latter was opposed to rational liberty, why was not the former? Besides, we learn, for the first time, that the Roman chancery decided on articles of faith: we had always thought that this was the exclusive province of general councils, and, when these were not in session, of the Roman Pontiffs with the consent or acquiescence of the body of bishops dispersed over the world. We had also, in our simplicity, believed that even these did not always decide on controverted points, but only in cases in which the teaching of revelation was clear and explicit; and that, in other matters, they wisely allowed a reasonable latitude of opinion. But D'Aubigné has taught us better! He would have us believe that Roman Catholics are bound hand and foot, body and soul, and that they are not allowed even to reflect!

They were certainly not allowed to “combat:”—this was the special privilege of the reformed party. The old Church wisely ordained that all the “combating” should take place, if at all, outside her pale: she would permit no wrangling nor sects within her own bosom. It is indeed curious to observe, how D'Aubigné boasts of this glorious new gospel privilege of wrangling among discordant sects, as the very quintessence of Christian liberty! This precious liberty could

---

\* St. Mark, xvi.

† St. Matthew, xxviii.

not be enjoyed so long as a recognition of the conservative principle of Church authority held the religious world in religious unity; the reformers therefore determined to burst this bond of union, and to assert their pugnacious freedom "to combat" at will! He says:

"The Reformation, in restoring liberty to the Church, must therefore restore to it its original diversity (!), and people it with families united by the great features of resemblance derived from their common head, but varying in secondary features, and reminding us of the varieties inherent in human nature. Perhaps it might have been desirable that this diversity should have been allowed to subsist in the universal church without leading to sectarian divisions; and yet we must remember that *sects* are only the expression of this diversity."\*

Humiliating avowal! Sects are therefore as essential characteristics of Protestantism, as are the "diversities" of which they are but the expression! And Christian liberty necessarily carries sects along with it! St. Paul, a competent authority, reckons *sects* and *dissensions* with *murders* and *drunkenness*; and he says of them all, that "they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God."† Thus, according to our historian, an essential element of the Reformation is, at the same time, an essential bar to entrance into the kingdom of heaven! The Reformation is welcome to all the merit of having originated such a system of liberty as this! As well might its panegyrist have claimed for it, as essential to the liberty which it brought into the world, a license for murders and drunkenness!

A little further on, he thus glories in the shame of Protestantism:

"True it is, that human passion found an entrance into these discussions (among Protestant sects), but while deploring such minglings of evil, Protestantism, far from seeking to disguise the diversity, publishes and proclaims it. Its path to unity is indeed long and difficult, but the unity it proposes is *real*."‡

Real in what? Is there one common ground of unity which

---

\* D'Aubigné, iii, p. 238. † Gallatians, v: 20, 21. ‡ D'Aubigné, iii, p. 238.

Protestantism has not recklessly trodden down and rendered desolate? Truly its path to unity "has been long and difficult!" During three hundred years, its tortuous course has been seen winding in more than a hundred different directions, and it has not yet led the weary wanderer to unity!

It has done precisely the contrary. It is a strange "path to unity," truly, which has always led to disunion. "Diversities and sects" have multiplied, and grown with the growth of Protestantism: they are avowedly its "essential features." There is scarcely one saving truth of revelation which Protestantism, in its ever downward career, has not frittered away. And yet we are to be told, that "the unity which it *proposed* was real." If such was the case, it certainly never carried into effect what it had *proposed*.

The only principle of unity possible among Protestants, is an agreement to disagree. But we are prepared to prove, that they were not disposed to meet even on this doubtful and slippery ground of union. One would have thought, that when the Reformation emancipated its disciples from the duty of obedience to Rome, and proclaimed the principle of private judgment as the broad basis, the magna charta, of the new system of Christian liberty, that it would at least have guaranteed to them freedom of thought and of judgment in matters of religion. Surely after having indignantly rejected the principle of Church authority, as incompatible with liberty, Protestantism would not attempt to enthrone again this self-same principle, much less to impose it as an obligation on its own followers.

Yet this course, absurd and inconsistent as it manifestly was, was the very one adopted, *without one exception*, by the numerous sects to which the Reformation gave birth! If there be any truth in history, the reformers were themselves the most intolerant of men, not only towards the Catholic Church, but towards each other. They could not brook dissent from the crude notions on religion which they had broached. Men might protest against the decisions of

the Catholic Church; but woe to them, if, following out their own private judgment, they dared protest against the self-constituted authority of the new-fangled Protestant sects. We have already given many proofs of this: but we here beg leave to submit the following additional facts. And we will allege little but Protestant authority, and the testimony of the reformers themselves.\*

Mr. Roscoe, whose pen has so glowingly depicted the bright literary age of Leo X., justly censures "the severity with which Luther treated those, who unfortunately happened to believe too much on the one hand, or too little on the other, and could not walk steadily on the hair-breadth line which he had presented." He also makes the following appropriate remark on this same glaring inconsistency:

"Whilst Luther was engaged in his opposition to the Church of Rome, he asserted the right of private judgment with the confidence and courage of a martyr. But no sooner had he freed his followers from the chains of papal domination, than he forged others in many respects equally intolerable; and it was the employment of his latter years, to counteract the beneficial effects produced by his former labors."†

The tyrannical and intolerant character of Luther, the father of the Reformation, is in fact admitted by all candid Protestants. We have already seen the testimony which his most favored disciple, Melancthon, bears to his brutal conduct even towards himself, whenever he timidly ventured to differ from him in opinion. The vile state of bondage in which the fierce reformer held his meek disciple is thus graphically painted in a confidential letter of Melancthon to his friend Camerarius: "I am in a state of servitude, as if I were in the cave of the Cyclops: and often do I think of making my escape."‡ Even Dr. Sturges, a most inveterate enemy of

---

\* We shall have occasion to furnish much additional evidence on this subject in our second volume, where we will treat of the Reformation in other parts of Europe.

† Life and Pontificate of Leo X., in 4 vols. 8vo.

‡ Epist. ad Camerarium.



Rome, grants that "Luther was in his manners and writings, coarse, presuming, and impetuous."\*

The other reformers were little better than Luther in regard to charity and toleration. The Protestant bishop Warburton gives the following character of all of them: "The other reformers, such as Luther, Calvin, and their followers, understood so little in what true Christianity consisted, that they carried with them into the reformed churches, that very spirit of persecution (!) which had driven them from the Church of Rome."† As we shall soon see, the recreant daughters of Rome far outstripped their mother in intolerance. We have already proved, that it was not persecution, but other causes altogether, which drove them from Rome, and consummated their schism. Rome had indeed been inflexible on the subject of doctrines, upon which she could allow no compromise; but she proceeded towards the reformers with so much mildness and moderation, as to have secured the admiration of even D'Aubigné, whose testimony on the subject we have already given. So far was she from persecuting them, that many Catholic writers have blamed, as excessive and injudicious, the mildness of her Pontiffs, and especially that of Leo X. and Adrian VI.

From an early period of its history, the Reformation was disgraced with the crime of persecution for conscience' sake. The oldest branch of it, the Lutheran, not only fiercely denounced, and even sometimes excluded from salvation, the reformed or Calvinistic branch; but it also endeavored to check by violence the fierce discord which raged within its own bosom. A learned Lutheran professor, Dr. Fecht, gives it as the opinion of his sect, "that all but Lutherans, and *certainly* all the reformed Calvinists were excluded from salvation."‡ The Lutheran Strigel was imprisoned for three years by his brother religionists, for maintaining that man

\* Reflections on Popery.

† Notes on Pope's Essay on Criticism.

‡ See Dr. Pusey's "Historical Inquiry," sup. cit.

was not a merely passive instrument in the work of his conversion. Hardenburg was banished from Saxony for having been guilty of some leaning towards the Calvinistic doctrines on the Eucharist. Shortly after Luther's death, the Lutherans were divided into two great sects, the ultra Lutherans and the Melancthonians, who mutually denounced each other, and even refused to unite in the rites of communion and burial. So far was the intolerance growing out of this controversy carried, that Peucer, Melancthon's son-in-law, was imprisoned for ten years, for having espoused the party of his father-in-law: and Cracau, another Lutheran, was plied with the torture for a similar offense! Besides these two great Lutheran sects, there were also the Flaccianists and the Strigelians, the Osiandrians and the Stancarians, and many others, who all persecuted one another with relentless fury. Lutheranism was thus, from its very birth, a prey to the fiercest dissensions. Verily, they claimed and fully exercised the precious liberty of "combat-ing," so essential, according to D'Aubigné, to the Protestant idea of religious liberty.\*

The first who dared question the infallibility of Luther was the first to feel the heavy weight of his intolerant vengeance. Andrew Bodenstein, more generally known by the name of Karlstadt, could not agree with him as to the lawfulness of images, the real presence, infant baptism, and some other topics. He had reached totally different conclusions, by following his own private judgment in expounding the Scriptures. During Luther's absence from Wittenberg, he had sought to make proselytes to his new opinions in the very citadel of the Reformation. Luther caused him to be driven from Wittenberg, and hunted him down with implacable resentment, driving him from city to city of Germany; till at last the unfortunate victim of his intolerance expired a miserable outcast at Basle in Switzerland.

---

\* For more on this subject, see the authorities quoted by Moore.—*Travels of an Irish Gentleman*, p. 172, seqq., and 192, seqq.; to whom we are indebted for many of the above quotations.

When Karlstadt first left Wittenberg, he fled to Orlamunde, a city of Saxony, in which he succeeded by intrigue in obtaining the place of pastor. Luther followed him thither; and finding, as we have already seen, that he could not succeed in having him ejected from the city by popular clamor, he prevailed on his powerful patron, the elector of Saxony, to banish him from Saxony. Karlstadt received the sentence of his condemnation with a heavy heart.

"He looked on Luther as the author of his disgrace, and filled Germany with his complaints and lamentations. He wrote a farewell letter to his friends at Orlamunde. The bells were tolled, and the letter read in the presence of the sorrowing church. It was signed: 'Andrew Bodenstein, expelled by Luther, unconvicted, and without even a hearing.'"<sup>\*</sup>

It is in vain for D'Aubigné, whose words we have just cited, to pretend that this persecution of Karlstadt was not brought about by Luther.<sup>†</sup> The testimony of Karlstadt, and of all Germany, to the sympathy of which he appealed, as well as the voice of all history, is against this hypothesis. So certain was it, that he owed his sufferings to the influence of Luther with the elector of Saxony, that, when wearied of his wanderings from city to city, he sought repose for his gray hairs in his native Saxony, he had only to invoke the sympathy of Luther. The sternness of the Saxon monk relented: he permitted Karlstadt to return to the neighborhood of Wittenberg; but only on condition that he should retract his errors, and cease to preach.<sup>‡</sup> Karlstadt joyfully accepted the humiliating conditions: he resided for some time "in a kind of domestic exile at Remberg and Bergwitz—two small villages, whence he could just see the steeples of Wittenberg."<sup>§</sup> But he soon forgot his promise: he abandoned the agricultural pursuits in which he had been engaged, and, Bible in hand, sought again to disseminate his doctrines. Luther's

---

<sup>\*</sup> D'Aubigné, vol iii, p. 179. He cites Luther's Epist. ii, 558, edit. de Wette.

<sup>†</sup> Ibid.

<sup>‡</sup> Gustavus Pfizer—"Martin Luther's Leiben," Ulenberg, and Ad. Menzel—"Neuere Geschichte Deutchen," 1, 269.

<sup>§</sup> Audin, p. 419.

spirit of intolerance was again aroused; and again was Karlstadt banished, never more to return to Wittenberg.

There were two other Lutheran theologians who shared his fate: Krautwald and Schwenkfeld, who were likewise forced to quit Saxony for having rebelled against the authority of the Saxon monk. In a letter to these companions in misfortune, Karlstadt draws a lively picture of the distress to which he had been reduced by the intolerance of Luther: "I shall soon be forced," says he, "to sell all, in order to support myself—my clothes, my delf, all my furniture. No one takes pity on me; and I fear that both I and my child shall perish with hunger."\* He also addressed a long letter of complaint against Luther, to Brück, the chancellor of Saxony:† but it was all unavailing. Luther was omnipotent at court, and Karlstadt perished in exile!—Why does D'Aubigné conceal all these important facts? We are not at all astonished at it: his history is of the same unfair and partial character throughout.

The cruel persecutions of the Anabaptists is another dark page in the history of the Reformation. To be sure, these sectarists taught many things subversive of all social order: such as polygamy and disobedience to all constituted authority. But their chief crimes, in the eyes of Luther and the reformers, were their rejection of Luther's authority, their pretensions to supernatural lights, and their protest against infant baptism, and baptism by any other mode than immersion. A little before the meeting of the diet at Augsburg in 1534, Rothmann, one of their principal prophets, had openly announced his principles in the streets of that city. The people were captivated by his bold eloquence, and seduced by the novelty of his doctrines. In vain did the preachers of reform attempt to argue with this enthusiast, who claimed immediate inspiration from heaven. The people cried out, in triumph; "Answer Rothmann: Catholics, Lutherans, Zuin-

---

\* Apud Audin, p. 420.

† Ibid.

glians—you are all in the way of perdition. The only path to heaven is that pointed out by our master: whoever walks not in it, will be involved in eternal darkness.”\*

But the Lutherans did not think proper to answer his arguments. Both he and the Zuinglians had prepared a confession of faith to be presented to the Diet. Luther and Melancthon succeeded by their influence in preventing them from being even heard at the Diet. The former wrote to the latter from Coburg in a tone of triumph: “That all was decided; that the doctrine of Zuingle and of Rothmann was diabolical; and that these sowers of discord, these ravenous wolves, who devastated the fold of Christ, should be banished.”† At this same Diet, the Lutherans sought for themselves, not only liberty of conscience, but churches to worship in, and all the privileges of citizenship; and still they would not allow their adversaries even to be heard! And yet, as Audin well remarks, “Rothmann at Augsburg, was precisely what Luther had been at Worms.”‡

The Lutherans carried out their intolerant principles in regard to the Anabaptists. On the 7th of August, 1536, a synod was convened at Homburg, to which deputies were sent by all the cities who had separated from Rome. The chief object of the meeting was to devise means for exterminating the Anabaptists. Not one voice was raised in their favor. Even Melancthon, whom Audin styles “the Fenelon of the Reformation,” voted for inflicting the punishment of death on every Anabaptist who would remain obstinate in his errors, or who would dare return from the place of banishment to which the magistrates might transport him. Fenelon would not have been thus intolerant.

“The ministers of Ulm demanded that heresy should be extinguished by fire and sword. Those of Augsburg said: ‘If we have not yet sent any Anabaptist to the gibbet, we have at least branded their cheeks with red iron.’ Those of Tubingen cried out ‘mercy for the poor Anabaptists, who

---

\* See Catrou—*Histoire de l’Anabaptisme*, and Audin, p. 459.

† Apud Audin, *ibid.* See the authorities he quotes, *ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

are seduced by their leaders; but death to the ministers of this sect.' The chancellor showed himself much more tolerant: he wished that the Anabaptists should be imprisoned, where by dint of hard usage, they might be converted."\*

From this synod emanated a decree, from which we will present the following extract, as a specimen of Lutheran intolerance, officially proclaimed:

"Whoever rejects infant baptism—whoever transgresses the orders of the magistrates—whoever preaches against taxes—whoever teaches the community of goods—whoever usurps the priesthood—whoever holds unlawful assemblies—whoever sins against faith—*shall be punished with death*. . . . As for the simple people who have not preached, or administered baptism, but who were seduced to permit themselves to frequent the assemblies of the heretics, if they do not wish to renounce Anabaptism, they shall be scourged, punished with perpetual exile, and even with *death*, if they return three times to the place whence they have been expelled."†

Philip, the pious landgrave of Hesse, professed to have some scruples of conscience on the severity of this decree: he consulted Luther on the subject.‡ The monk answered him in a letter dated from Wittenberg, the Monday after Pentecost of the same year. He therein openly defended persecution on Scriptural grounds:

"Whoever denies the doctrines of our faith—aye, even one article which rests on the Scripture, or the authority of the universal teaching of the church (!), must be punished severely. He must be treated not only as a heretic, but also as a blasphemer of the holy name of God. It is not necessary to lose time in disputes with such people: they are to be condemned as impious blasphemers."

Towards the close of this letter, speaking of a false teacher,

\* Catrou, ut supra liv. i, p. 224, seqq., and Audin, p. 464.

† Ibid. See also Gastius, p. 365, seqq. Menzel, ut supra, and Meshovius, l. v, cap. xv, xviii, seqq., etc.

‡ W. Menzel confirms this. Speaking of the same Diet of Augsburg in which the Lutheran confession of faith which bears its name was presented, he says, that the landgrave of Hesse suddenly left the meeting, "filled with anger at the weakness of his friends in subscribing to the decree, by which the disciples of Zuingle were put under the ban of the empire."—Hist. Germany, vol. ii, p. 251.

he says: "Drive him away, as an apostle of hell: and if he does not flee, deliver him up as a seditious man to the executioner."\*—The landgrave's scruples were quieted, and Luther's advice was acted on!

Such, then, were the tender mercies of the Reformation! Such the notions of the reformers on religious liberty! How different were they from those specious principles of universal liberty by which they had allured multitudes to their standard!

The other reformers were not a whit better than Luther in regard to toleration. D'Aubigné himself says, that at Zurich fourteen men and seven women "were imprisoned on an allowance of bread and water in the heretics' tower."† True, he says, that this was done "in spite of Zuingli's entreaties;"‡ but he gives no authority whatever for this statement. We know that Zuingli was almost omnipotent at Zurich, which was to Switzerland, what Wittenberg was to Germany. Had he *really* wished it, he might surely have prevented this cruelty. He had indeed complained of Luther's intolerance, when he was the victim of its violence. In a German work published at Zurich in 1526, he had used this language in regard to the course pursued by Luther and his party:

"See then, how these men, who owe all to the word, would wish now to close the mouths of their opponents, who are at the same time their fellow Christians. They cry out that we are heretics, and that we should not be listened to. They proscribe our books, and denounce us to the magistrates."§

But when *his* star culminated, he was as fierce a bigot, and as intolerant a tyrant, as those brother reformers whom he thus strongly denounced. Did he not die on the field of battle, fighting for his peculiar ideas of reform? And did not the Protestants of Switzerland throw the poor Anabaptists into the Rhine, inclosed in sacks, and jeer them at the same

---

\* Luth. Comment. in Psal. 71. Opp. Jenæ tom. v, p. 147. Apud Audin, p. 465.

† D'Aubigné, vol. iii, p. 307.

‡ Ibid.

§ Apud Audin, p. 411.

time with the inhuman taunt, "That they were merely baptizing them by their own favorite method of immersion."\*

This reminds us of a curious passage in the history of early Lutheranism, which we will here give on the authority of Florimond Remond, almost a contemporary historian.† Franz Von Sickingen, the chief actor in the scene we are about to present, was a disciple of Luther, who had dedicated to him his treatise on confession, written at the Wartburg, in 1521.

"One day Franz was going from Frankfort to Mayence on the Maine. A Jew entered the boat, with whom Franz began to dispute. As he was not able to convince him by argument, he took him by the middle of the body, and threw him into the river; for Franz was a man of extraordinary strength. Holding his victim suspended over the water by the hair, the following dialogue took place: 'Acknowledge Jesus Christ, or I will drown you.'—'I acknowledge him to be my Saviour: O dear master, do not harm me!'—'Say that you wish to be baptized.'—'Yes, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Then Franz took some water, which he poured on the head of the Jew, while at the same time he pronounced the sacramental words: 'I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' The poor Israelite now made a great effort to rise: he clung to the boat, believing that the time of his deliverance had arrived. The knight, however, struck him on the head with his gauntlet, saying, 'Go to heaven, there is one soul more for paradise. Were I to draw the wretch out of the water, he would deny Christ, and go to the devil.' Luther on this occasion praised the zeal of Franz!"

The Calvinists were at least as intolerant as the Lutherans. When the former gained the ascendancy in a portion of Germany in which the latter had before been predominant, they roused up the people against the sons of the devil, the mild and charitable name which they gave the Lutherans.

---

\* As we have already seen, the Protestant historian of Germany, Wolfgang Menzel, bears evidence to this fact, when he says, speaking of the Anabaptists: "Zuingli declared against them, and caused several of them to be drowned (A.D. 1524); but was nevertheless regarded by Luther as a man who, under the cloak of spiritual liberty (!), sought to bring about political changes."—Vol. ii, p. 233.

† "Huttenus delarvatus," p. 405. Apud Audin, p. 200.



"They drove them from their posts, of which they took possession. 'What a melancholy thing! More than a thousand Lutheran ministers were proscribed, *with their wives and children*, and reduced to beg the bread of charity,' says Olearius.\* Calvinism could not tolerate Lutheranism. It had appealed to Prince Casimir, and expressed its petition in two Latin verses, in which the prince was left to choose, in extinguishing the rival creed, between the sword, the wheel, the water, the rope, or fire!—

"O Casimire potens, servos expelle Lutheri:  
Ense, rotâ, ponto, funibus, igne neca."†

So inflexible were the early reformers and their disciples on the subject of persecution, that even the emperor of Germany and the authority of the whole Germanic body could not restrain their bitter intolerance against all who ventured to differ from their own peculiar ideas of reform. Protestants were resolved to persecute each other, though a Catholic power—the highest in the empire—interposed and commanded peace. The diet of Nuremberg, in 1532, had proclaimed a religious amnesty throughout Germany. The assembled princes wished to pour oil on the boiling waves of controversy, in order to still them: but the waves would not be quieted. The heads of the reformed party met at Cadan in the following year, and resolved to exclude from the peace, published by this diet, the Sacramentarians, the Anabaptists, and other heterodox (not Lutheran) sects, whom they declared *they would not tolerate nor suffer to remain in the country.*‡

If Protestants thus ruthlessly persecuted one another, we might naturally suppose that they were not more indulgent towards the Catholics. We have already proved that the Reformation was mainly indebted for its success to systematic persecution of the Catholic Church. Wherever it made

---

\* D. J. Olearius—"In den mehr als 200 Irrthümer der Calvinisten."

† Salzer—"In seinem Lutherischem Gegen-Bericht"—Art. iv, p. 385. Schlosser—"In der wahrheit," etc., chap. vi, p. 73. Hist., Aug. Confess. fol. 206, 207, 274, 275. Apud Audin, p. 330.

‡ See Robelot—Influence de la Reformation de Luther, p. 71. Sup. cit.

its appearance its progress was marked by deeds of violence. Like a tornado, it swept every thing before it; and you might as easily trace its course by the ruins it left behind. Churches broken open and desecrated; altars stripped of their ornaments or pulled down; paintings and statues destroyed; the monasteries entered by mobs and pillaged of their effects; Catholic priests, monks, and nuns openly insulted and maltreated; the property of the churches and monasteries seized on by violence, after having been often pillaged and plundered: these were some of the ruins which the Reformation caused; these the sad trophies which it erected to celebrate its triumphs over the Catholic religion!

In most places the Catholic worship was abolished, either by open violence, or by the high-handed tyranny of the secular princes who had embraced the reform. In vain did Luther in his cooler moments protest against these deeds of violence; he himself, as we have seen, had evoked the storm, and he could not calm it; probably he did not even seriously wish this, for generally his language to his followers had breathed nothing but violence. This we have already shown.

It is a remarkable fact, as certain as it is striking, that the reformers derived their very name of *Protestants* from this same unquenchable spirit of intolerance! The diet of Spire in 1529 had made an effort to put a stop to the deeds of violence by which the Reformation had desolated Germany. It had published a law, which, among other things of less importance, enjoined that the decree of the diet of Worms in 1521 should be observed in those places where it had been already received; that where it had not been received, and the ancient religion had been changed in despite of it, things should continue *in statu quo* till the meeting of a general council, which was to decide on the matters in controversy; that the celebration of the holy sacrifice of the Mass should be everywhere free; and that the princes of the empire should

mutually observe peace, and should not molest each other on the score of religion.\*

In other words, the diet decreed that Catholics and Protestants should enjoy freedom of worship, and that neither should molest the other. Had the reformers been really the advocates of religious liberty, they could have asked no more. But they desired something else: their notions of Christian liberty were much more enlarged! They desired freedom to pull down the Catholic altars, and to abolish the Catholic worship wherever they had the power to do so. Hence, they met immediately after the diet, and *protested* against this most equitable decree as "contrary to the truth of the gospel!"†—And hence their name of *Protestants*: a name which stamped on their foreheads a brand of intolerance, of which they were not ashamed!‡

A volume might be filled with undoubted facts proving the intolerant spirit of the early Protestants of the various nations of Europe against the Catholics. Wherever they obtained the power to do so, they invariably persecuted the Catholics by civil disabilities and corporal punishments; and where they had not the power they excited disturbance and persecuted them by slander. We know of no exception to this remark. Unpalatable as it may appear, it is triumphantly established by the facts of history; and we are not free to change the records of the past to pander to an over delicate

\* See Sleidan—ad annum 1529, lib. vi. Also Natalis Alexander, *Hist. Ecclesiastica*, tom. ix. fol. 79, edit Venitiis, 1778; and Lingard, *History of England—Henry VIII.*; and Audin, p. 289.

† Ibid.

‡ In his *Constitutional History of England*, Hallam makes this same statement; p. 64, note.—American edit., 1 vol. 8vo. He says:

"They declared, in the famous protestation of Spire, which gave them the name of Protestants, that their preachers having confuted the Mass by passages from Scripture, they could not permit their subjects to go thither; since it would afford a bad example to suffer two sorts of service directly opposite to each other in their churches." He quotes Schmidt, *Hist. des Allemands*, vi, 394; vi, 24.

and vitiated taste. Out of a mass of evidence bearing on the subject, we will select some of the more prominent facts.

We have already alluded to the overture for peace made by the Catholics in the diet of Nurenberg, held in 1532. How was it received by the Lutherans? They rejected it with indignation, not only in the assembly at Cadan, but also through their organ, Urbanus Regius. Hear his language:

"We must either have peace with the papists—that is, we must suffer the destruction of our faith, our rights, our life, and die as sinners—or we must have peace with Christ, that is to say, be hated by our enemies, and live by faith. Which shall we choose? The rage of the devil, the hostility of the world, a struggle with Antichrist, or the protection of heaven, and life through Christ?"\*

Luther openly defended the violence by which the Catholic worship had been suppressed, and the monasteries seized upon and secularized. He was consulted on the subject, and this was his reply:

"It is said that no violence should be used for conscience' sake; and yet have not our princes driven away the monks from their asylum? Yes: we must not oblige any one to believe our doctrine; we have never done violence to the consciences of others (!); but it would be a crime not to prevent our doctrine from being profaned. To remove scandal is not to force the conscience. I can not force a rogue to be honest, but I can prevent him from stealing. A prince can not constrain a highway robber to confess the Lord, but yet he has a gallows for malefactors."

Strange casuistry! Curious theory of religious liberty! He continues:

"Thus, when our princes were not certain that the monastic life and private Masses were an offense to God, they would have sinned had they closed the convents; but after they have been enlightened, and have seen that the cloister and the Mass are an insult to the Deity, they would have been culpable had they not employed the power they had received to proscribe them."†

In the famous convention at Smalkald, in 1536, the Protestant party decided on a recourse to arms to defend them-

---

\* Seckendorf—"Comment. de Luth." lib. iii, p. 22.

† Luth. Opp. edit. Wittenb., ix, 455.

selves; that is, to be enabled to carry out their favorite plan of establishing the Reformation by violence on the ruins of Catholic institutions. They proclaimed that "it was an error to believe that they *ought to tolerate* among them those who opposed the reform."\* In an imperial citation addressed to the citizens of Donauwert in 1605, they are reproached with having driven from their city, as atrocious malefactors,† those of their fellow citizens who had espoused Catholic wives, or embraced the Catholic religion.‡ Again, at a session of the famous congress of Westphalia, in March, 1647, Trautmansdorf openly accused the Protestant party of having driven Catholic laymen from their dominions, after having confiscated their property.§

This spirit of persecution has been perpetuated, with some modifications, even down to the present day. Erasmus had remarked of Luther that his savage nature had not been softened down by the blandishments of matrimony; and we may remark that the fierce intolerance of the early Reformation has not been much mitigated by the growing refinement of the age!

Even as late as the battle of Jena, in 1806, Catholics could not own property in Saxony, nor hold public offices, nor enjoy any of the rights of citizenship.|| This was also the case in Prussia; and in our own days, have we not seen a venerable octogenarian, the archbishop of Cologne, violently dragged from his palace by a band of soldiers, in the dead hour of night, and confined for years in a state prison, by order of the king of Prussia, and all this for no other offense than that his conscience did not allow him to subscribe to the will of his royal master?

In the imperial city of Frankfort on the Maine, Catholics were not eligible to any municipal offices. As late as the 20th of October, 1814, no others than Lutherans of the con-

\* See Robelot, ut sup., p. 71.

† Atrocissimè delinquentes.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid., p. 72.

|| Ibid., p. 70.

fession of Augsburg were eligible to any civil office in the free city of Hamburg.\* In Sweden it is strictly forbidden for any Protestant to embrace the Catholic religion, though Catholics are encouraged to become Protestants. No Catholic can there hold any office of trust or emolument. The same intolerant laws are in force in Denmark and Norway. In these kingdoms, religious persecution, in one form or other, has continued even to the present day. In many of the other Protestant kingdoms of Germany, the penal laws against Catholics were softened down after the Congress of Vienna, in 1815, had settled the general peace of Europe. Yet the refinement of modern civilization has not been able wholly to exorcise the demon of intolerance. It still exists, to a greater or less extent in every Protestant country of Europe.†

But the other day, when the Roman Pontiff nominated a bishop to attend to the spiritual wants of a large body of Catholics living in the kingdom of Denmark, the government organ at Copenhagen republished an old law of the kingdom, which made it a capital offense for a Catholic clergyman or bishop to cross the border! And when the celebrated De Haller embraced the Catholic religion, in 1821, the grand council of Berne, in Switzerland, had his name stricken from the list of its members, and revived the old law of the canton by which no Catholic is eligible to office.‡

In one word, not to multiply facts, Protestants have been guilty of persecution in *every* country of Europe where they have had the power, not only against the Catholic Church, but against one another: and their intolerance, though greatly

\* See apud Robelot, ut supra.

† But the other day, the indignation of all Europe was aroused by the banishment from Sweden of several helpless ladies, whose only crime was having followed their private judgment and conscience in embracing the Catholic religion. Baptists and other Protestant dissenters from Lutherans have also shared a similar fate. And this in the middle of the nineteenth century!

‡ See apud Robelot, ut supra.

mitigated, is still even at the present enlightened day far from being extinct.

Catholics also, we must admit, have sometimes persecuted. Yet every impartial person must allow that the circumstances under which they persecuted were not so aggravated, nor so wholly without excuse, as those under which they were themselves persecuted by Protestants. The former stood on the defensive, while the latter were in almost every instance the first aggressors. The Catholics did but repel violence by violence, when their property, their altars, and all they held sacred, were rudely invaded by the new religionists, under pretext of reform. Their acts of severity were often deemed necessary measures of precaution against the deeds of lawless violence, which everywhere marked the progress of reform. They did but seek the privilege of retaining quietly the religion of their fathers, which the reformers would fain have wrested from them by violence. They were the older, and they were in possession.\* Could it be expected that they would yield without a struggle all that they held most dear and most sacred? These were extenuating circumstances, which, though they might not wholly justify their intolerance, yet greatly mitigated its malice; while the reformers could certainly allege no such pretext in self-vindication.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature in the Protestant governments of Europe is the union in them of church and state. This unhallowed union began at the period of the Reformation itself; and it subsists, with but slight modification, even down to our own days. In Prussia, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, and England, the king is at the same time the head of the state and of the church established by law. It is his province to regulate, in ultimate resort, every thing connected with the preaching of the word, the adminis-

---

\* In the Synod of Dort in 1618, the Gomarists used this very argument to justify their persecution of their brother Protestants, the Arminians! (Sess. xvii.) Their possession had been, however, of very recent date.

tration of the sacraments, and the appointment of bishops and pastors. Even in those cantons of Switzerland in which the Reformation obtained a footing, the legislative councils still claim a right to interfere in spiritual matters; and the Catholics of Argovia and other cantons have, not long ago, felt the smart of this intolerant interference.

Every body knows the high-handed measures by which the late king of Prussia sought to unite into one "national church of Prussia" the two conflicting parties of religionists in his kingdom, the Lutherans and Calvinists. This political maneuver, to effect by force a compromise between two warring sects, displeased them both, as might have been expected; and many of the ejected ministers of both parties, but especially of the Lutheran, sought shelter from the storm in foreign countries, and some of them on our own shores. The entire success of this attempt, made by the court of Berlin on the religious liberties of Prussia, proves conclusively, that there at least the Protestant church is but the creature of the state—meanly subservient to all its commands.

Every one also knows, that the persecution of the Catholics of Belgium by the Protestant government of Holland led to the successful declaration of independence by the former government, more than a quarter of a century ago: and that after the declaration had been made good, the Belgians elected the Protestant Prince Leopold as their sovereign. Can the annals of Protestantism afford an example of liberality like this? At least, we have never heard of a Protestant community voluntarily choosing a Catholic sovereign.

If the Reformation was favorable to religious liberty, why, we ask, did it bring about a union of church and state in every country where it was established? Why did it everywhere persecute? It is curious to trace the origin of this mean subserviency of the various Protestant sects to the princes, under whose auspices they were respectively established.

The reformers preached up freedom from the alleged



tyranny of Rome: the people were seduced by this flattering appeal to their natural aversion to restraint; and the Reformation was thus effected in the manner which we have endeavored to unfold. Once freed from the authority of Rome, the reformers threw themselves and their partisans, for protection, into the arms of the secular princes who had espoused their cause; and these gave them a bear's embrace! They had escaped from an *imaginary*, they now fell into a *real* bondage. They had gone out of the dark land of Egypt, and had returned from the captivity of Babylon: but in the land of promise into which they led their exulting hosts of disenthralled disciples, they found other Pharaohs and other Nabuchadonosors, who lorded it over them with a rod of iron!—"And the last state of these men was made worse than the first."\*

Luther soon perceived, that the only means of stemming the torrent of innovation, which he had let loose on the world, was to give unlimited power to princes in spiritual matters. Melancthon earnestly labored to retain the order of bishops; but his unrelenting master could not brook this odious remnant of the Papacy. The result was, as Melancthon had foreseen, that for them he substituted other bishops—princes armed with the power of the sword. These were very far from being so scrupulous as had been their Catholic predecessors in the episcopal office! After having seized and embezzled the property of the Catholic Church, they reigned supreme in church and state. They interfered in the minutest affairs of church government. It was by the importunities of the *pious and scrupulous* landgrave of Hesse, that Luther was induced, against his inclination, to suppress the elevation of the Host in the Mass.† Thus, as Audin well remarks, "the Reformation which was ushered into Germany by its apostles, as a means of forcing the people from the sacerdotal yoke, created a pagan monstrosity—hierophant and magis-

---

\* St. Matthew, xii : 45.

† Jak. Marx., sup. cit., p. 177.

trate—who with one arm regulated the state, and with the other, the church.”\*

The Protestant historian of Germany fully admits this. After the lines had been pretty well drawn between the Catholics and Protestants, the diet of Augsburg laid down and established the famous maxim, that in matters of religion each prince was supreme in his own dominions. This principle was embodied in the Latin motto: *CUJUS REGIO, EJUS RELIGIO*—literally, *whose region, his religion!* If this iron maxim, plainly destructive of the right of private judgment, weighed somewhat heavily on the Protestant subjects of Catholic princes, it operated much more oppressively against the Catholic subjects of Protestant princes. These were, by its action, compelled to abandon their time-honored religion at the mere bidding of their prince, whose religious caprices thus became the supreme law in religion as in government! In Catholic governments, on the contrary, it operated merely as a conservative policy, and it simply checked innovation on the established order of things. The maxim itself clearly proves that religious liberty, as we now understand the term, was very far from the thoughts and ideas of the German reformers and of their disciples.

With these observations we subjoin the remarkable passage from Menzel:†

“Every obstacle was now removed, and a peace, known as the religious peace of Augsburg, was concluded by the diet held in that city, A. D. 1555. This peace was naturally a mere political agreement provisionally entered into by the princes for the benefit, not of religion, but of themselves. Popular opinion was dumb, knights, burgesses, and peasants bending in lowly submission to the mandate of their sovereigns. By this treaty, branded in history as the most lawless ever concerted in Germany, the principle ‘*CUJUS REGIO, EJUS RELIGIO*,’—the faith of the prince must be that of the people,—was laid down. By it not only all the reformed subjects of a Catholic prince were exposed to the utmost cruelty and tyranny, but the religion of each separate country was rendered dependent on the caprice of the reigning prince; of this the Pfalz offered a sad example, the religion of the people

---

\* Audin, p. 347.

† History of Germany, vol. ii, p. 270.

being thus four times arbitrarily changed. The struggles of nature and of reason were powerless against the executioner, the stake, and the sword. This principle was, nevertheless, merely a result of Luther's well-known policy, and consequently struck his contemporaries far less forcibly than after-generations. Freedom of belief, confined to the immediate subjects of the empire, for instance, to the reigning princes, the free nobility, and the city councilors, was monopolized by at most twenty thousand privileged persons, including the whole of the impoverished nobility, and the oligarchies of the most insignificant imperial free towns, and it consequently follows, taking the whole of the inhabitants of the empire at twenty millions, that, out of a thousand Germans, one only enjoyed the privilege of choosing his own religion."

This usurpation of Protestant princes was afterwards again legalized, and it became a settled matter of state policy, at the congress of Westphalia in 1648, after the close of the Thirty Years' War. This congress recognized in the Protestant princes of Germany the *jus reformandi*, or the right to reform the churches existing within their dominions, according to their own judgment and good pleasure.\* Thus, after a protracted struggle of more than a hundred years, during which oceans of blood had been poured out in the sacred name of liberty, Protestantism finally sunk down exhausted—a degraded slave—in the murderous embrace of earthly princes! It was bound hand and foot, and could not move, but by the permission of its remorseless master!

The reformers were themselves the sole cause of this unhappy result. They had flattered princes, and had courted this very union, to which may be fairly traced the servile degradation of the sects they respectively founded. They had invoked the power of the sword, not only against Catholics, but also against their brother religionists, who dared oppose their own schemes of reformation. They had proclaimed, that the right of suppressing heresy "belonged only to princes who alone could mow down the cockle with the sword."† At the general assembly of the Protestant party

---

\* Jak. Marx—Audin, p. 347.

† Ott. annum, 1536. Gastius, sup. cit., p. 365. Audin, p. 463.

at Homburg in 1536, the deputies of Lunenburg had said: "The magistrate has the power of life and death over the heretics."\*

Luther himself, in his defense of the enactments of this assembly, addressed to the landgrave of Hesse,† had laid down this sweeping principle:

"If then there takes place between Catholics and sectaries, one of those discussions in which each combatant advances with a text, it is the duty of the magistrate to take cognizance of the dispute, and to impose silence on those whose doctrine does not accord with the holy books."—Could he consistently blame princes for afterwards tyrannically using the power which he himself had vested in them?

The history of the union of church and state in Saxony, will throw some light on its subsequent establishment in other Protestant countries. It was to meet the wishes and to carry out the suggestions of Luther, that John, elector of Saxony—naturally a weak and effeminate prince—first interfered in the affairs of the church. After he had entered, however, on his new spiritual functions, his *ardent* zeal carried him further than the monk had bargained for.

"He determined to free himself from the domination of the clergy (Protestant); and for that purpose found that the most efficacious means was to apply at once the reforming theories of Luther to the organization of parishes. A commission of ecclesiastics and laymen was accordingly named by the elector, who were charged to visit and administer the different districts. It was a real revolution. The church lost even its name; it was turned into a pagan temple."‡

Let us also see what is the opinion of the Protestant Hallam on the influence of the Reformation on religious liberty. He surely is not prejudiced against the reformers, as we have already had occasion to see; and his opinion must therefore be of great weight with Protestants. We have already given some extracts from his latest work, bear-

\* Ott. ad annum, 1536, p. 86.

† Referred to above, p. 328.

‡ Audin, p. 353. We have above quoted a passage from Menzel, which fully confirms this, and even goes further.

ing indirectly on the present subject. We add the following passages:

"It is often said that the essential principle of Protestantism, and that for which the struggle was made, was something different from all we have mentioned; a perpetual freedom from all authority in religious belief, or what goes by the name of the right of private judgment. But, to look more nearly at what occurred, this permanent independence was not much asserted, and still less acted upon. The Reformation was a change of masters; a voluntary one, no doubt, *in those who had any choice*; and, in this sense, an exercise, for the time, of their personal judgment. But no one having gone over to the confession of Augsburg or that of Zurich, was deemed at liberty to modify these creeds at his pleasure. He might, of course, become an Anabaptist or an Arian; but he was not the less a heretic in doing so, than if he had continued in the Church of Rome. By what light a Protestant was to steer, *might be a problem, which at that time, as ever since, it would perplex a theologian to decide*: but in practice, the law of the land which established one exclusive mode of faith, was the only safe, as, in ordinary circumstances, it was, upon the whole, the most eligible (!) guide."\*

In another place, speaking of the causes which brought about the decline of Protestantism and the reaction of Catholicity, he says:

"We ought to reckon also among the principal causes of this change, those perpetual disputes, those irreconcilable animosities, that bigotry, above all, and persecuting spirit, which were exhibited in the Lutheran and Calvinistic churches. Each began with a common principle—the necessity of an orthodox faith. But this orthodoxy evidently meant nothing more than their own belief as opposed to that of their adversaries; a belief acknowledged to be fallible, yet maintained as certain; rejecting authority in one breath, and appealing to it in the next, and claiming to rest on sure proofs of reason and Scripture, which their opponents were ready, with just as much confidence, to invalidate."†

In conclusion, we may observe, that in regard to toleration, the Catholic countries of Europe at the present time compare advantageously with those which have been *enlightened* by the Reformation for the last three hundred years. There is not *one* Catholic government of Europe which now persecutes

---

\* "History of Literature," etc., vol. i, p. 200.      † Ibid., vol. i, p. 278.

for conscience' sake: and on the other hand, there is scarcely one Protestant government which *does not* persecute, in one form or other, even at this day! We have already seen what has been, and to a great extent is still, the policy of the latter in regard to religious liberty. Our assertion in regard to the former, can be easily substantiated.

Belgium is Catholic, and Belgium allows equal political rights to Protestants with Catholics, and is at the same time, perhaps, the freest monarchy in Europe. The inquisition has been long since abolished in Spain and Portugal, and these no longer persecute dissenters. France is Catholic, and France not only does not persecute, but she protects the Protestant religion, and pays its ministers even more than she allows to the Catholic clergy—which is but equitable, as the former have their wives and families to support!

Bavaria is Catholic; and Bavaria allows equal civil rights to Protestants as to Catholics. Austria is Catholic; and Austria adopts the same equitable policy. Bohemia is Catholic; and Bohemia imitates the example of the other Catholic states: and the same may be said of Hungary, which, like Bohemia, is a dependency of the Austrian empire. Italy is Catholic; and Protestants have places of worship and public cemeteries at the very gates of the eternal city itself. So far is this toleration carried, that but a few years since, a parson of the church of England, delivered a course of lectures against "popery" at Rome itself; and Dr. Wiseman answered them.

Poland—poor bleeding and crushed Poland, *was* Catholic to its very hearts' core; and Poland was seldom, if ever sullied with persecution. Ireland was ever Catholic; and Ireland never persecuted, though she had it in her power to do so at three different times. Finally, it was the Catholic Lord Baltimore, and the Catholic colonists of Maryland, who, in 1648, first proclaimed on this broad continent, as a settled law, the great principle of universal toleration, while the

Puritans were persecuting brother Protestants in New England, and the Episcopalians were doing the same thing in Virginia!\*

---

## CHAPTER XIII.

### INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON CIVIL LIBERTY.

"The most striking effect of the first preaching of the Reformation was that it appealed to the ignorant; and though political liberty . . . cannot be reckoned the aim of those who introduced it, yet there predominated that revolutionary spirit which loves to witness destruction for its own sake, and that intoxicated self-confidence which renders folly mischievous."—HALLAM."†

Boasting—Theory of government—Political liberty—Four things guarantied—Pursuit of happiness—The Popes and liberty—Rights of property—Use made of confiscated church property—The Attila of the Reformation—Par nobile fratrum—Spoliation of Catholics—Contempt of testamentary dispositions—The jus manuale abolished—And restored—Disregard of life—And crushing of popular liberty—The war of the peasants—Two charges made good—Grievances of the peasants—Drowned in blood—Remarkable testimony of Menzel—Luther's agency therein—Halting between two extremes—Result—Absolute despotism—Swiss cantons—D'Aubigné puzzled—Liberty, a mountain nymph—The old mother of republics—Security to character—Recapitulation.

THE friends of the Reformation have been in the habit of boasting, that to it we are indebted for all the free institutions we now enjoy. Before it, there was nothing in the world but slavery on the one hand, and reckless despotism on the other:

---

\* See Bancroft's History of the United States, vol. 1, Maryland. About the same time, or perhaps a few years previously, Roger Williams, driven into the wilderness by the Puritans of Massachusetts, established the colony of Rhode Island, the charter of which granted free toleration, from which, however, the Catholics were in all probability excluded, at least until a considerably later period.

† "History of Literature," vol. i, p. 192.

after it, came liberty and free government. In school-boy orations and Fourth-of-July speeches; in sermons from the pulpit and in effusions from the press; this assertion has been reiterated over and again with so much confidence, that many persons of sincerity and intelligence have viewed it as founded in fact. To such we would beg leave to present the following brief summary of evidence bearing on the subject. Let them read both sides; and then will they be able to form an enlightened judgment.

D'Aubigné asserts roundly: "The Reformation saved religion, and with it society."\* We have already seen what it did for religion: we will now examine what it did for society. Did it really save society; or was society saved in *spite* of it? To narrow down the ground of the inquiry; did it really contribute by its influence to check political despotism, and to protect the rights of the people? Or, in other words, did it develop the democratic principle, and originate free institutions? Were we to decide according to the measure of its boasting, it certainly did this and much more. It had liberty forever on its lips: it loudly proclaimed that one great object of its mission was to free mankind from a degrading servitude, both religious and political. But was its practice in accordance with its loudly boasting theory? We shall see.

Political liberty guaranties security to life, to property, to character, and to the pursuit of happiness: and it does this with the least possible restraint on personal freedom. The greater the security to these objects, and the less the restraint on individual liberty, the more free and perfect is the system of government. A well regulated democracy—where the people can bear it—best corresponds with this theory, and is therefore, with the condition just named, the best of all possible forms of government. And the nearer others approximate to this standard, the more do they verge to perfection. Such are the principles of our political creed: and by them

---

\* D'Aubigné, vol. i, p. 67.



as a test, we are willing to decide on the influence of the Reformation on free government. Did this religious revolution provide greater security to life, property, honor, and the pursuit of happiness, with less restraint to individual liberty than had previously existed? If it did, then was its influence favorable to liberty; if it did not, then, however its advocates may boast, its influence was decidedly hostile to true civil liberty. We will stand by these principles, which we are sure our adversaries will not be disposed to reject, at least in this country.

1. We will begin with the object of government last named—security to men in the pursuit of happiness. No government is free, which does not guaranty this. The highest, the most noble, and the only sure way of pursuing happiness, is by the path of religion. Without this, there is, and can be, no real or permanent happiness, either in this world or in the next. This, we think, will be admitted by all who are imbued with the very first principles of Christianity. Now, there is manifestly no freedom in this exalted pursuit, without the guaranty of religious liberty. Hence, a system, which has sapped the very foundations of religious liberty, could not guaranty one of the greatest objects of all free governments—security in the pursuit of happiness. Now, we have already proved, that the Reformation did not secure, but rather destroyed religious freedom: therefore, the inference is irresistible, that it did not tend to promote free government.

We will pursue this line of argument a little further. The Reformation cast off the religious yoke of the Pontiffs and of the Catholic Church; and, in its place, it wore, solidly riveted on its neck, that of the princes who had espoused its cause. Was the exchange favorable to liberty? Did the union of church and state, which necessarily ensued, secure to Protestants in Germany a greater amount of freedom than they had heretofore enjoyed? The Pope was far off, and he generally interposed his authority only in spiritual matters, or in great emergencies of the state: the princes, who succeeded to his

authority, were present, and they interfered in every thing, both in church and state. They were in fact supreme in both. When they chose to play the tyrant, who was to oppose their will?

The reformed party were powerless: they had given up themselves, bound hand and foot, into the power of their princes. The voice of the Roman Pontiffs, which had hitherto thundered from the Vatican, and stricken terror into the heart of tyranny, was now also powerless: the reformers themselves had drowned that voice in the maddening clamor of their opposition to the Pope. What resource had they left to meet and repel royal tyranny? They had themselves, of their own accord, rendered powerless the only arm which could protect them, or redress their grievances.

The time has gone by, for men of sense and intelligence to clamor against the tyranny of the Roman Pontiffs. Protestants themselves are beginning to view these much abused men in a more favorable light than they did heretofore. They no longer paint them as the unmitigated tyrants who lorded it over the world for their own selfish purposes and unhallowed ambition; but as the saviours of Europe, and the protectors of its political rights trodden in the dust by tyrants. Such Protestant writers as Guizot, Voigt, Ranké, Pusey, and Bancroft, have done at least a measure of justice to the Popes.

The last named says, speaking of Pope Alexander III., who lived, A. D. 1167: He,

"True to the spirit of his office, which during the supremacy of brute force in the middle age, made of the chief minister of religion the tribune of the people and the guardian of the oppressed, had written, 'that nature having made no slaves, all men have an equal right to liberty.'"<sup>\*</sup>

We might quote many similar acknowledgments made by Protestant writers: but the fact we have asserted will scarcely be questioned, and we may refer in general to the works of the writers mentioned above for evidence in its support. Nothing

---

\* History of the United States, vol. i, p. 163.

is, in fact, more certain than that the Popes of the middle ages labored assiduously to maintain the rights of the people against the tyranny of their princes. Whenever they struck a blow, it was generally aimed at tyranny, and well calculated to raise up the lower orders in the scale of society. The oppressed of every nation found a willing and a powerful advocate in Rome. When the Roman Pontiffs threw around the people the broad shield of their own protection, it was more effectual towards their defense against the tyranny which had ground them in the dust, than had been the eagles which had perched on the Roman standard of old. For Germany particularly, the deposing power, claimed by the Popes of the middle ages, was a broad ægis thrown around the liberties of its people. When was that power ever exercised, but in behalf of the poor, the crushed, and the bleeding? And when was it evoked except against tyranny and an oppression no longer tolerable, or remediable by any other means? We know of few, if of any cases of its exercise, except under such circumstances as these.

What would have become of the liberties of Europe in that period of anarchy and tyranny, but for the exercise of papal power? No other authority was available: because no other voice would have been heard or respected, amidst the general din of war and the confusion of the times. And by destroying that authority, the reformers broke down the most effectual barrier against tyranny, and destroyed the greatest security to popular rights.

2. But perhaps the Reformation provided greater security for the rights of property, than had been made in the good old Catholic times?—We have seen how the Protestant princes seized upon and alienated the vast property of the Catholic Church. They diverted it from its legitimate channels, and generally embezzled it for their own private uses. Neither the public treasury nor the people profited much by this sacrilegious invasion of church property: it was generally spent in profligacy.

True, the Protestant princes, who became the heads of the reformed churches, promised, in some places, to employ at least a portion of the immense property thus seized on by violence, for the establishment of public schools and hospitals. But this promise was never carried into effect, at least to any great extent. Thus, in Sweden, a great portion of the church property was given to the nobles, as a reward for their co-operation with the monarch—Gustavus Wasa—in carrying out his favorite project of reform: another large portion was annexed to the crown; and the miserable remnant was doled out, with a niggardly hand, for the support of the episcopal body—which was there retained—of the inferior clergy, and of the charitable and literary institutions.\* In Denmark, the monarch and the nobility shared the spoils.†

In Germany, the avarice of the nobility swallowed up almost every thing, which had escaped the grasp of the perjured monks, or the pillage of the infuriated mobs. We have already seen, how Luther himself lashed them, with his withering eloquence, for their sacrilegious avarice, which had left almost nothing of the ample patrimony of the Church, for the support of the reformed preachers and *their wives*! We shall see, in the sequel, how he rebuked their parsimony, in not erecting and supporting public schools.

The ejected Catholic monks and clergy were reduced to beggary, and had no alternative left, but to starve, or to obtain a livelihood at the price of apostasy. Alas! too many of them adopted the latter alternative! John Hurd, a counselor of the elector of Saxony, whose authority is cited by Luther in his appeal against the avarice of the princes, asserts that the Protestant nobility had squandered in licentiousness, not only the goods of the monasteries on which they had seized, but also their own private patrimony—so sadly demoralized had they become.‡

---

\* See Robelot, sup. cit., p. 177.

† Ibid. We shall treat of this subject at some length in our second volume.

‡ Ibid., p. 178.

Many of these marauding princes were not content with the pillage of the church property within their own territory, but sallied forth with an armed band to devastate that of their neighbors. We have already adverted to the memorable exploits of many German princes in this way, and have seen how gallantly their armed bands put to flight whole troops of cowed monks and helpless women, in order to seize on their property! We have seen the excursion of the apostate Albert of Brandenburg, at the head of ten thousand armed men, into the territory of the Prince Bishop of Treves: and how their sacrilegious devastations there were like those of an army of Huns.

This man, viewed by D'Aubigné as a saint, but more properly called by his contemporaries, "the Attila of the Reformation,"\* established a temporal principality, and laid the foundation of the present kingdom of Prussia, by his successful invasion and gigantic pillage of property belonging to much better men than himself. He not only appropriated to his own private use the vast property belonging to the Teutonic Order, of which he was the general; but he also, by the same lawless means, annexed to his territory all eastern Prussia. He was as treacherous and unprincipled, as he was avaricious and lawless. To promote the purposes of his ambition, he passed from the camp of Henry II., to that of the Catholic Charles V.; and though the treaty of Passau had guaranteed to the Lutherans of the Confession of Augsburg the free exercise of their religion, he, at the head of his troops, ravaged the territories of the Protestant princes—thus recklessly sacrificing friends as well as enemies! The Reformation is welcome to all the credit its cause may derive from such *saints* as he and the landgrave of Hesse. Yet these two men were among its chief supports, and brightest ornaments; and their glory is intimately blended with that of the Reformation.

---

\* See Robelot, sup. cit., p. 206

Bayle says to the reformed party, with caustic truth: "You forget every thing, when it is question of your interests."\* The League of Smalkald, noticed above, had for one of its principal objects, to protest against the decisions of the imperial courts, which had not granted entire liberty to the Protestant princes to pillage at will the property of the Catholics! It is a remarkable fact, that most of the criminal prosecutions commenced in these courts were directed against the lawless violence of the Protestant nobility, and especially of the noted landgrave of Hesse.† Catholics could not be secure in their property, and even the protection of the emperor was unavailing for this purpose in those times of lawless depredation and gospel zeal!

And be it remembered, that Catholics still formed the great body of the Germanic empire. Thus the Reformation succeeded in depriving, to a great extent, of their most sacred rights, the vast majority of the people. Was this course favorable to liberty, which is a mere name, without security to property? The truth seems to be, that the reformed party were so much attached to liberty, that they wished to monopolize it altogether, and have it all for themselves. No one else was deemed worthy to enjoy the precious boon!

But, perhaps, the most mischievous influence of the Reformation on the rights of property, was its reckless disregard of testamentary dispositions. The property which the Protestant princes thus seized on and alienated, had been—most of it—accumulated from pious bequests, made for special church and charitable purposes, by men on their death-beds. What right had the reformed party to interfere with these testamentary dispositions? What right had they to divert the property thus created, from the channels in which the abiding Catholic feeling of respect for the dead had caused it to flow for centuries? What right had they, above all, to

---

\* Œuvres, tom. ii, p. 621. La Haye, 1727.

† See Robelot, ut supra, p. 205, note,

squander, and to appropriate to their own unhallowed purposes, wealth which had been hitherto applied, by the express will of those who had bequeathed it, to religious and charitable objects?

And what security was there any longer left for the rights of property, when even the sanctity of last wills and testaments was thus recklessly disregarded and trampled upon? Had those charitable men of the good old Catholic times been able to rise up from their tombs, how they would have rebuked this sacrilegious alienation of the property they had left! True, some stop was put to this unhallowed wholesale sequestration of church property by the treaty of 1555; in which such property was declared sacred, and last wills were pronounced inviolable; and Robertson, the historian of Charles V., tells us, that, at this treaty, the Protestant princes themselves, after having at first opposed the article which checked their lawless violence, withdrew at length their objections, and acquiesced in its equity.\* But the mischief had already been done, and they had already fattened on the spoils of the Church! Their forbearance was therefore not very wonderful, under the circumstances.

But for the tumults caused by the Reformation, the rights of property would, in all probability, have been permanently settled throughout Germany, at the close of the fifteenth century. The frequent depredations committed by the feudal chieftains of the middle ages on the property of each other and of their vassals, had been already effectually checked by the Emperor Maximilian, in an imperial law passed in 1495. This law of the empire abolished altogether what was called the *jus manuale*—or the right claimed by many lawless feudal sovereigns to take by force whatever they could lay their hands on; and it established an imperial court of adjudication, in which all points of contested jurisdiction were to be definitely settled, and all grievances from violations of the

---

\* History of Charles V., l. xi. Cited by Robelot, p. 181.

law to be redressed. Germany enjoyed a profound peace for many years after the enactment of this wise law: men breathed more freely; *might* and *right* were no longer synonymous terms; the rights of property were re-established.\*

But this peace was, alas! of but short duration. It was a calm, which preceded an awful storm. The violent preaching of Luther against emperors, princes, and bishops, aroused again into full activity the dormant passions of the lower orders. Hence the dreadful war of the peasants, with all its appalling horrors, its effusion of blood, and the desolation with which it afflicted Germany. Seven years only had elapsed since the commencement of the Reformation; and the confusion of the middle ages returned. The rights of property, of life, and of liberty were again ruthlessly trampled under foot with impunity. Wholesale sacrilege, unheard of in the Catholic middle ages, now became the order of the day. Robbery began with the house of God! The years 1524 and 1525 were awful years for Germany. The princes of the empire availed themselves of the general disorder, to commit all manner of excesses. No man's property, or liberty, or life was any longer safe. The tree planted by Luther at Wittenberg was bearing its bitter first fruits!

3. The history of this war of the peasants sheds so much additional light upon the influence of the Reformation on the rights of the lower orders and the liberty of the people, that we will be pardoned for dwelling on it at some length. Our limits will however allow only a brief summary of the more prominent facts, and a rapid sketch of the leading features of that eventful struggle. It will be seen from this brief examination that the Reformation provided no security whatever, either for personal liberty, or for life itself.

We deliberately charge on the Reformation two things: 1st, that it stimulated the peasants to revolt; 2dly, that it

---

\* For a luminous view of this, see Robelot, ut sup., p. 200, 201.



used its powerful influence to crush that revolt by force, and to drown the voice of the poor peasants, crying out for redress of grievances, in their blood! The result of the rebellion, thus stifled in their blood, was a weakening of the democratic principle, and a strengthening of the arm of power. At the close of the dreadful struggle, liberty lay crushed and bleeding, and despotism, armed with all its iron terrors, was triumphant. We hope to make good these assertions by undeniable facts and unexceptionable evidence.

A Protestant historian of Germany, Adolphus Menzel, candidly admits that Luther's doctrines were calculated to sow the seeds of sedition among the lower orders.\* The violent appeal he had made to the people against the emperor and the princes of the empire, at the close of the diet of Nuremberg, in 1522—two years before the revolt of the peasants—was, in fact, nothing else but an open call to rebellion.† His words fell, like burning coals, on the inflammatory materials which then abounded in Germany. The standard of revolt was everywhere raised: and on it was inscribed the talismanic word—LIBERTY. Far from wishing to extinguish it, Luther fanned the flame with his breath. When the insurrectionary movements were reaching his own Saxony, he addressed a pamphlet to the German nobility, in which he sided with the peasants, and openly charged the princes with being the cause of the revolt.

He cried out:

“On you rests the responsibility of these tumults and seditions; on you, princes and lords, on you especially, blind bishops and senseless priests and monks! You, who persist in making yourselves fools, and opposing the gospel, although you know that it will triumph, and that you shall not prevail. How do you govern? You only know how to oppress, to destroy, and to plunder, for the purpose of maintaining your pomp and pride. The people and the poor have got enough of you. The sword is raised over your heads, and yet you believe yourselves so firmly seated, that you can

---

\* “Neuere Geschichte der Deutschen”—Tom. 1, p. 169.

† See extracts from this writing in Audin, p. 285, seqq.

not be overthrown. . . . My good sirs, it is not merely the peasants who rise up against you; it is God himself who comes to chastise your tyranny. A drunken man must have a bed of straw; a peasant will require something softer. Go not to war with them; you do not know how the affair will terminate.”\*

This was an appeal worthy of an apostle of liberty—it was seized up with avidity by Münzer and the other leaders of the revolt: all Germany was in arms.—How soon did Luther change his note, and preach up the extermination of these same peasants by fire and sword! Before we show this, however, we must first see what were the principal grievances of which the peasants complained, and what were their demands.

There is no doubt, that there was much fanaticism, and much extravagance in the whole insurrectionary movement of the peasants: but there is as little doubt, that most of their claims were founded in strict justice. Chrystopher Schappeler, a Swiss priest, drew up their manifesto, in which they demanded, among other things of less moment: “That they should pay tithes only in corn—that they should no longer be treated as slaves, since the blood of Jesus had redeemed them—that they should be allowed to fish and to fowl, since God had given them, in the person of Adam, dominion over the fishes of the sea and the fowls of the air—that they might cut in the forest wood for fuel and for building—that the labor should be diminished—that they should be permitted to possess landed property—that the taxes should not exceed the value of the property—that the tribute to the nobles, after the death of a father of a family, might be abolished, so that his widow and orphans might not be reduced to beggary—and finally, that if these grievances were not well founded, they might be disproved from the word of God.”\*

---

\* See Audin, p. 309, 310.

† Catrou—*Histoire du Fanatisme*, tom. 1. Menzel, tom. 1, apud Audin, p. 311–2. See also Robertson’s *Charles V.*, in one vol. 8vo., American edit. p. 205–6. We will give the more detailed account of Menzel a little further on. There are two Menzels, Wolfgang and Adolf—we refer to the former.

How was this declaration of grievances met by the reformed party? • If they were really the friends of liberty, they would at once have recognized the justice of most of these demands, and would have urged the princes to grant them. At least consistency, if not justice, required that Luther should have adopted this course. And yet he—the same Luther, whom we have just heard rebuking the tyranny of the princes, and justifying, nay, urging forward the peasants in their revolt—the very same man now changed his tactics, and loudly clamored for the blood of the peasants! He met their challenge, in which they had triumphantly appealed to the Scriptures for their justification, and wrote a labored treatise to prove, from the word of God, that they were in the wrong!

In this reply to their statement of grievances, he said:

“I know that Satan, under pretext of the gospel, conceals among you many men of a cruel heart, who incessantly calumniate me; (*was this the reason why he abandoned their cause?*). But I despise them: I do not dread their rage. You tell me that you will triumph; that you are invincible. But can not God, who destroyed Sodom, overcome you? You have taken up the sword; you shall perish by the sword. In resisting your magistrates, you resist Jesus Christ.”

He then goes on to answer, from the Scriptures, their demands, one by one. Bible in hand, he defends tithes and even the enslaving of the poor peasants, who had demanded to be free:

“You wish to emancipate yourselves from slavery: but slavery is as old as the world. Abraham had slaves, and St. Paul establishes rules for those whom the laws of nations reduced to that state.”—As if conscious of his own treachery and utter inconsistency, he winds up his reply with these words: “On reading my letter, you will shout and exclaim, that Luther has become the courtier of princes: but before you reject, at least examine my advice. Above all, listen not to the voice of those new prophets who delude you. I know them.”\*

What a change! As Luther had anticipated, the peasants accused him, with justice, of perfidy to them, and of mean

---

\* Apud Audin, p. 312, 313.

sycophancy to princes. To prove the perfidy, Münzer read to the assembled multitudes an extract from Luther's violent appeal against "the ecclesiastical order falsely so called,"\* in which he had said:

"Wait, my lord bishops, yea, rather imps of the devil; Doctor Martin Luther will read for you a bull, which will make your ears tingle. This is the Lutheran bull—whoever will aid with his arms, his fortune, or his life, to devastate the bishops and the episcopal hierarchy, is a good son of God, a true Christian, and observes the commandments of the Lord."

In his answer to Prierias, which it appears Münzer had not seen, Luther had employed this terrible language:

"If we hang robbers on the gallows, decapitate murderers, and burn heretics, why should we not wash our hands in the blood of those sons of perdition, those cardinals, those popes, those serpents of Rome, and of Sodom, who defile the church of God?"†

Luther's interposition in favor of order came too late: and it lost all its force by the manifest treachery and inconsistency with his previous declarations. The struggle went on; the hostile armies met on the memorable field of Frankhausen: the confederated princes were triumphant, and the peasants were butchered like sheep. Their prophet Münzer fell mortally wounded: he embraced again the Catholic faith, and to his last breath accused Luther of having been the cause of all his misfortunes!‡

"Such was the end of the war of the peasants. In the short time in which they were permitted to afflict society, it is estimated that more than a hundred thousand men fell on the field of battle, seven cities were dismantled, fifty monasteries razed to the ground, and three churches burned—not to mention the immense treasures of painting and sculpture, of stained glass and of beautifully written manuscripts—which were annihilated. Had they triumphed, Germany would have relapsed into barbarism: literature, arts, poetry, morality, faith, and authority, would have been buried under

\* "Contra falso nominatum ordinem ecclesiasticum." Luth. Opp., ed. Wittenb., ii, fol. 120, seqq.

† Osiander (a Protestant) Cent. 161, etc., p. 109. Audin, p. 213.

‡ For a graphic description of this whole struggle, see Audin, p. 315, seqq.

the same ruin. The rebellion which Luther had caused, was the daughter of disobedience: her father, however, knew how to chastise her. If there was innocent blood shed, let it be on his head. 'For,' says the reformer, 'it is I who have shed it, by order of God; and whoever has perished in this combat, has lost both soul and body, and is eternally damned.' \*\*

The voice of all history proclaims, that Luther was the cause of the insurrection of the peasants, and of their subsequent slaughter. Even Protestant contemporary historians have accused him of all this. Osiander says: "Poor peasants, whom Luther flattered and cajoled, while they were content with attacking the bishops and the clergy! But when the revolt assumed another aspect, and the insurgents mocked at his bull, and threatened him and his princes—then appeared another bull, in which he preached up the slaughter of the peasants as if they were so many sheep. And when they were killed, how, think you, did he celebrate their funeral?—By marrying a nun!" This reminds us of Erasmus' beautiful remark given above, that while Luther was reveling in his nuptials, "a hundred thousand peasants were descending to the tomb!"

Hospinian, another Protestant writer, says, addressing Luther: "It is you who excited the peasants to revolt."† Memno Simon, another Protestant, asserts the same thing.‡ Cochlæus, a Catholic historian of the time, estimates the number of the slaughtered peasants at one hundred and fifty thousand; and says: "On the day of judgment, Münzer and his peasants will cry out before God and his angels, 'vengeance on Luther!'"§

---

\* Tisch Reden, edit. Eisleb., p. 276. Luth. Opp., edit. Jenæ. Tom. iii, fol. 130. Audin, p. 318.

† "Historia Sacramentar." pars 2, fol. 200.

‡ Lib. de cruce.

§ Cochlæus—Defensio Ducis Georgii, p. 63, edit. Ingolstadt, an. 1545, in 4to.

Wolfgang Menzel estimates the number of the slaughtered peasants at one hundred thousand! He says: "Thus terminated this terrible struggle, during which more than one hundred thousand of the peasantry fell, and which reduced the survivors to a more degraded state of slavery."—History of Germany, vol. ii, p. 244. Bohn's edition.

And have we not heard Luther himself boldly avowing his agency in the whole transaction, and even boasting of it, with a kind of fiendish exultation? Had he not recommended the princes to have no pity on the peasants, and threatened them with the indignation of God, if they poured oil on their bleeding wounds? Had he not said: "Give the peasants oats; and if they grow strong-headed, give them the stick and the cannon ball?"†

The unexceptionable Protestant historian of Germany, whom we have just quoted, furnishes the following fuller account of the revolt of the peasants, of the detailed grievances for which they sought redress, and of Luther's agency in having them cruelly butchered, for no other crime than their having dared ask for a very moderate share of popular liberty:

"The peasantry discovered extreme moderation in their demands, which were included in twelve articles, and elected a court of arbitration consisting of the Archduke Ferdinand, the elector of Saxony, Luther, Melancthon, and some preachers, before which their grievances were to be laid.

"The twelve articles were as follows:—1. The right of the peasantry to appoint their own preachers, who were to be allowed to preach the word of God from the Bible. 2. That the dues paid by the peasantry were to be abolished, with the exception of the tithes ordained by God for the maintenance of the clergy, the surplus of which was to be applied to general purposes and to the maintenance of the poor. 3. The abolition of vassalage as iniquitous. 4. The right of hunting, fishing, and fowling. 5. That of cutting wood in the forests. 6. The modification of socage and average service. 7. That the peasant should be guaranteed from the caprice of his lord by a fixed agreement. 8. The modification of the rent upon feudal lands, by which a part of the profit would be secured to the occupant. 9. The administration of justice according to the ancient laws, not according to the new statutes and to caprice. 10. The restoration of communal property, illegally seized. 11. The abolition of dues on the death of the serf, by which the widows and orphans were deprived of their right. 12. The acceptance of the aforesaid articles, or their refutation as contrary to the Scriptures.

"The princes naturally ridiculed the simplicity of the peasantry in deem-

---

\* Epist. Nich. Amsdorf, 30 Maii, 1525.

† Epist. to Ruhel, edit. de Wette, tom. ii, p. 669.

ing a court of arbitration, in which Luther was to be seated at the side of the archduke, possible, and Luther himself refused to interfere in their affairs. Although free from the injustice of denying the oppressed condition of the peasantry, for which he had severely attacked the princes and nobility, he dreaded the insolence of the peasantry under the guidance of the Anabaptists and enthusiasts, whom he viewed with deep repugnance, and, consequently, used his utmost endeavors to quell the sedition; but the peasantry believing themselves betrayed by him, gave way to greater excesses, and Thomas Münzer openly accused him of 'deserting the cause of liberty, and of rendering the Reformation a fresh advantage for the princes, a fresh means of tyranny.'

"The whole of the peasantry in southern Germany, incited by fanatical preachers, meanwhile revolted, and were joined by several cities. Karlstadt, expelled from Saxony, now appeared at Rotenburg on the Tauber; and the Upper German peasantry, inflamed by his exhortations to prosecute the Reformation independently of Luther, whom he accused of countenancing the princes, rose in the March and April of 1525, in order to maintain the twelve articles by force, to compel the princes and nobles to subscribe to them, to destroy the monasteries, and to spread the gospel. Mergentheim, the seat of the unpopular German Hospitallers, was plundered. . . .

"This atrocious deed drew a pamphlet from Luther 'against the furious peasantry,' in which he called upon all the citizens of the empire 'to strangle, to stab them, secretly and openly, as they can, as one would kill a mad dog.\*' The peasantry had, however, ceased to respect him."

Such, then, were the tender mercies of the Reformation! Such its regard for the lower orders! Such its political code! The poor peasants were first stimulated to take up arms to secure their freedom, and then butchered by tens of thousands! In their tomb was buried whatever of liberty remained in Germany. The princes became omnipotent: the revolt once crushed, no one dared any longer to raise his voice in defense of freedom!

The Reformation had halted for a brief space between two dreadful extremes: that of absolute and uncontrolled despotism on the one hand, and that of dreadful anarchy on the other. It at first favored the latter, but soon it threw the

---

\* "Casper von Schwenkfeld said: 'Luther has led the people out of Egypt (the Papacy) through the Red Sea (the peasant war), but has deserted them in the wilderness.' Luther never forgave him." Menzel, *ibid.*

whole weight of its powerful influence into the scales of the former. The result has been, what might have been expected, absolute despotism and union of church and state in every country of Germany, where the Reformation obtained a solid footing! Had the reformers been really the friends of humanity and of liberty; had they urged the princes to redress the just grievances of the peasants; the issue of that struggle would have been very different. The lower orders would have been raised in the scale of society, and free institutions, which have not blessed Germany since the days of Luther, would have been established on a solid and permanent basis.

One of the most famous Protestant historians of the day, Guizot, once prime minister of France, tells us, in his *Lectures on Civilization in Modern Europe*: "that the emancipation of the human mind (by the Reformation!), and absolute monarchy triumphed simultaneously throughout Europe."\* All who have but glanced at the political history of Europe, in the sixteenth century, must at once see the truth of this startling remark. In the Protestant kingdoms of continental Europe, this rule suffers no exception: in all of them, absolute monarchy, in its most consolidated and despotic form, dates precisely from the period of the Reformation.†

Witness Prussia, Denmark, Sweden, and, we may add, England: for it is certain, that for one hundred and fifty years following the Reformation in England, the liberties of the people were crushed; the privileges secured by the Catholic Magna Charta were wantonly trampled under foot; and the royal prerogative almost swallowed up every other element of government. It was only at the period of the revolution, in 1688, that the principles of the great Catholic Charter were

---

\* Page 300 of *Lectures, etc.*, American edit., 1 vol. 12mo.

† In the year 1848 some ameliorations were obtained or promised, but they were generally of a transient character. Even in Sweden, of whose popular institutions we sometimes hear or read, the Lutheran religion is firmly established by law, and a union of church and state in its very worst form exists, even down to the present day.



again feebly asserted, and partially restored to their proper influence in the government.\*

In Catholic countries, the necessity of strong measures of precaution against the seditions and tumults occasioned by the Reformation in every place where it had made its appearance, necessarily tended to strengthen the arm of the executive: and in the general ferment of the times, the people willingly resigned most of the civil privileges they had enjoyed during the middle ages, in order, by increasing the power of their rulers, the more effectually to stem the torrent of innovation, and to avert the threatened evils of anarchy. Thus the political tendency of the Reformation, both directly and indirectly, favored the introduction of absolute systems of government throughout Europe.

And thus do we clearly owe to the "glorious Reformation," the despotic governments, the vast standing armies, and we may add, the immense public debts and the burdensome taxation, of most of the European governments. Guizot's assertion is then well founded, both in the principles of political philosophy, and in the facts of history. We may however remark, that it was a strange "emancipation of the human mind" truly, which thus avowedly led to the "triumph of absolute monarchy throughout Europe!"

It would seem that Switzerland at least was an exception to Guizot's sweeping assertion; as absolute monarchy never was established in its cantons, even *after* the Reformation. But the reader of Swiss history will not fail to observe, that wherever Protestantism was established in that country, there the democratic principle was weakened, there the legislative councils unduly interfered in spiritual matters, and there despotism thus often triumphed in the much abused name of liberty. Those cantons of Switzerland precisely are the freest,

---

\* See an able essay on this subject in Nos. xv, xviii, xix, of the Dublin Review, "On Arbitrary Power, Popery, Protestantism;" republished in a neat 12mo volume by M. Fithian, Philadelphia, 1842, pp. 251.

which have remained faithful to the Catholic religion. In them, you read of no persecution of Protestants for conscience' sake, of no attempts to unite church and state, and of little departure in any respect from the original Catholic charter of Swiss liberties. . It is a remarkable fact, that the three cantons which first asserted Swiss liberty—those of Schweitz, Uri, and Unterwald—have all continued faithful to the Catholic Church, as well as to the good old principles of democracy bequeathed to them by the Catholic founders of their republic.

D'Aubigné admits, and he is sadly puzzled to account for, this stern adherence of the oldest and freest Swiss cantons to the Catholic faith. He explains it in his own characteristic way, by appealing to the inscrutable ways of the Providence of God! He says:

“But if the Helvetic towns, open and accessible to ameliorations, were likely to be drawn early within the current of the Reformation, the case was very different with the mountain districts. It might have been thought that these communities, more simple and energetic than their confederates in the towns, would have embraced with ardor a doctrine, of which the characteristics were simplicity and force; but He who said—‘at that time two men shall be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left’—saw fit to leave these mountaineers, while he took the men of the plain. Perhaps an attentive observer might have discerned some symptoms of the difference, which was about to manifest itself between the people of the town and the hills. Intelligence had not penetrated to those heights. Those cantons which had founded Swiss liberty, proud of the part they had played in the grand struggle for independence, were not disposed to be tamely instructed by their younger brethren of the plain. Why, they might ask, should they change the faith in which they had expelled the Austrians, and which had consecrated by altars all the scenes of their triumphs? Their priests were the only enlightened guides to whom they could apply; their worship and their festivals were occupation and diversion for their tranquil lives, and enlivened the silence of their peaceful retreats. They continued closed against religious innovations.”\*

Sure enough: why should they change the religion which had sealed their liberties with its divine sanction, and the

---

\* D'Aubigné, vol. i, p. 82, 83.

principles and the worship of which were so closely interwoven with their most cherished patriotic reminiscences? "Intelligence had not penetrated to those heights," indeed! Those mountaineers were not sufficiently enlightened to perceive,—what no one has yet perceived—that the seditions and tumults which everywhere marked the progress of the Reformation were favorable to liberty. They may well bless the day, in which they took the resolution to adhere to the faith of their patriotic forefathers: and, from their mountain heights, amidst "their peaceful retreats," they may look down with proud complacency on their "brethren of the plain" torn by civil factions and religious dissensions—persecuting and proscribing one another—all in consequence of their having had the "intelligence" to embrace the "glorious Reformation!"

John Quincy Adams, the "old man eloquent," has offered a far more plausible solution of the difficulty which so sadly puzzled the mind of D'Aubigné. In a speech, which he made some years ago at Buffalo, he said that "liberty was a mountain nymph," who loved always to breathe the purest air, and to dwell in the most lofty situations, nearest to heaven! The old Swiss cantons had an instinctive feeling of the truth of this beautiful and poetic thought. They loved liberty, and therefore they remained Catholic.\*

Did our space permit, we might here show what were the political opinions of the various Catholic States of Europe, adopted under the influence of the Catholic Church, for centuries before the Reformation was even heard of. We might prove, that the Catholic Church was the mother of republics; and that during what are sometimes called the Dark Ages, every important principle of free government—popular representation, trial by jury, exemption from taxation without the consent of the governed, habeas corpus, and the great fundamental principle, that all power emanates from the people—

---

\* In the next chapter, we will show the political thralldom of Geneva under Calvin.

were generally recognized and firmly established. We might moreover show, how almost every one of these sacred principles was successfully trampled on and abolished by that very Reformation, which is forever boasting its advocacy of free principles! But we have elsewhere devoted a special essay to this interesting and highly suggestive subject.\* By comparing the political state of Europe in the good old Catholic times, with what it subsequently became, after the Reformation had done its work, the reader will be best enabled to ascertain and appreciate the influence of this latter revolution on civil liberty.

4. Enough has, however, been already established to enable the impartial reader to form an enlightened judgment on the real political influence of the Reformation. We have seen, that with liberty forever on its lips, it really trampled under foot almost every element of popular government: that it weakened, and in many cases for a long time entirely destroyed all security to life, to property, and to the pursuit of happiness: and that withal, it everywhere imposed the intolerable yoke of absolute despotism, with union of church and state, on the necks of its disciples.—And all this, after men had been seduced to its banner, by the enticing name of liberty which they read inscribed thereon! But we have scarcely as yet alluded to the influence of the Reformation on one other essential element of free government—security to character. Did the Reformation provide more ample security to this—the dearest perhaps of all human rights—than had been insured during the Catholic times?

The Reformation, as we have already shown, created dissensions and sowed distrust among those who had been hitherto united as brethren. It split up the religious world, till then composing but “one sheepfold under one Shepherd,” into a hundred warring sects. These carried on bitter con-

---

\* See the essay, *On the Influence of Catholicity on Civil Liberty*, republished in our *Miscellanea*.

troversies with one another, while all united in fiercely denouncing those who continued faithful to the religion of their forefathers. Acrimonious denunciation, and personal recrimination, with the most scurrilous abuse, became the order of the day under the new state of things. The arms of ridicule, of caricature, of misrepresentation, and of open calumny were constantly used, in the hallowed name of the religion of peace and love! No man's character was any longer secure, especially if he had the independence to adhere to the ancient faith, and to call in question the infallibility of the new dogmatizers.—Does not every one recognize at once the truth of this picture? And is it not true, to a great extent, even at the present day? What security then, we ask, did the Reformation provide for character?

Thus, the boasted Reformation trampled in the dust every important object of free government: security to life, to character, to property, to the pursuit of happiness, to personal liberty. And still we are to be told, that to it we are indebted for all the liberty we possess!

In further confirmation of what has been already advanced in this and the preceding chapters, we will here furnish the testimony of the two recent Protestant travelers referred to above—Bremner and Laing—in regard to the present condition of civil and religious liberty in Northern Europe, which has been for three centuries wholly under Protestant influence.

Bremner assures us that the king of Denmark is “the most uncontrolled sovereign in Europe. We have looked for,” he adds, “but can find no single check to the power of the king of Denmark. Laws, property, taxes, all are at the mercy of his tyranny or caprice.” The Danes boast much of the liberation of the peasants in 1660: but Mr. Bremner says, “that this was not a liberation of any class in the kingdom, but the more complete subjugation of all classes to the crown; and that the peasants remained and still remain in many parts of Denmark little better than serfs.”\*

---

\* In the work cited above, chap. viii.—See Dublin Review for May, 1843.

Laing confirms this statement. The following is his remarkable language:

"It is one of the most remarkable circumstances in modern history, that about the middle of the seventeenth century, when all other countries were advancing towards constitutional arrangements of some kind or other, for the security of civil and religious liberty, Denmark by a formal act of her states or diet, abrogated even that shadow of a constitution, and invested her sovereigns with full despotic power to make and execute law, without any check or control on their absolute authority. Lord Molesworth, who wrote an account of Denmark in 1692, thirty-two years after this singular transaction, makes the curious observation—'*that in the Roman Catholic religion there is a resisting principle to absolute civil power, from the division of authority with the head of the Church at Rome; but in the north, the Lutheran church is entirely subservient to the civil power, and the whole of the northern people of Protestant countries, have lost their liberties ever since they changed their religion for a better.*' . . . . 'The blind obedience which is destructive of natural liberty, is, he conceives, more firmly established in the northern kingdoms by the entire and sole dependence of the clergy upon the prince, without the interference of any spiritual superior, as that of the Pope among Romanists, than in the countries which remained Catholic.'"<sup>\*</sup>

This observation of Lord Molesworth, startling as it may appear, is clearly grounded in history; and Laing further confirms its truth in his interesting work on Sweden. He says:

"The Swede has no freedom of mind, no power of dissent in religious opinion from the established church; because although toleration nominally exists, a man not baptized, confirmed, and instructed by the clergyman of the establishment, could not communicate in the established church, and could not marry, or hold office, or exercise any act of majority as a citizen—would, in fact, be an outlaw!"

He then goes on to prove that there is in Sweden a most rigid form of inquisition, which annually, even at this day, severely punishes from forty to fifty persons for alleged offences against religion:

"The crime of 'mockery of the public service of God, or contemptuous

---

For more on this subject, we refer the reader to the chapter of our second volume on the Reformation in Denmark etc.

\* Work cited above, chap. viii.

behavior during the same,' is the first in the rubric of the second class of crimes : that is, it comes after murder, blasphemy, sodomy, but before perjury, forgery, or theft. It is, evidently, a very undefined crime, but is visited with punishment in chains for various terms of years, as a crime against the church establishment. Between 1830 and 1836, not fewer than two hundred and forty-two persons have been condemned to chains for this crime in Sweden. Who will say, that the inquisition was abolished by Luther's Reformation? It has only been incorporated with the state in Lutheran countries, and exercised by the church through the ecclesiastical department of government in the civil courts, instead of in the church courts. The thing itself remains in vigor; Lord Molesworth was right when he said, that the whole of the northern people of Lutheran countries had lost their liberties ever since they changed their religion for a better." (worse?)

In Sweden, and, in fact, in all Northern Europe, the lower orders are but little better than slaves. The servant may be cudgeled by his master, and no matter how barbarously he be treated, provided he be neither killed nor maimed, he has no legal recourse! Laing himself tells us as much.

"The servant has no right of action on the master for personal maltreatment, and during his time of service has no more rights than a slave." "These people," he adds, "are trained to obedience, and in that class, to consider nothing their own but what is left to them by the clergy and the government, to whom, in the first place, their labors, time, and property must belong. A country in this state, wants the very foundation on which civil liberty must stand—a sense of independence and property among the people."

He sums up his remarks on the political and religious condition of Sweden as follows:

"Such a state of laws and institutions in a country, reduces the people as moral beings to the state of a soldiery, who, if they fulfill their regimental duties and military regulations, consider themselves absolved from all other restraints on conduct. This is the condition of the Swedish people. The mass of the nation is in a state of pupilage, living like soldiers in a regiment, under classes or oligarchies of privileged bodies—the public functionaries, clergy, nobility, owners of estate exempt from taxation, and incorporated traders exempt from competition. Under this pressure in Sweden upon industry, property, liberty, free opinion and free will, education is but a source of amusement, or of speculation in science, without influence on private morals, or public affairs; and religion, a superstitious observance of church days, forms, and ordinances, with a blind veneration for the clergy," etc.

The politico-religious condition of Prussia is not a whit more flattering. The serf system continued to prevail in this kingdom even up to the beginning of the present century; and Laing assures us, that "the condition of these born-serfs"—the great body of the people—"was very similar to that of the negro slaves on the West India estate during the apprenticeship term, before their final emancipation."

He proves that the so much vaunted system of common school education in Prussia, is little more than a powerful state engine to enslave the people.

"This educational system is, in fact, from the cradle to the grave, nothing but a deception, a delusion put upon the noblest principle of human nature—the desire for intellectual development—a deception practiced for the paltry political end of rearing the individual to be part and parcel of an artificial system of despotic government, of training him to be either its instrument or its slave, according to his social station."

He further demonstrates the utter political degradation of Prussia, by enlarging upon the apathy with which the royal fusion of the two Protestant sects into one by the late king of Prussia, was viewed by the mass of the population. He proves at length that the Prussian is, in every respect, the veriest political and religious slave—bound hand and foot by government.

Such then has been, from unexceptionable Protestant testimony, the practical influence of the Reformation on civil and religious liberty in those countries where that influence has been least checked, and longest exercised!



## CHAPTER XIV.

THE REFORMATION AT GENEVA, AND ITS INFLUENCE  
ON CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

Character of Calvinism—Protestant historians—The “Registers”—Audin—Calvin’s character—His activity—His heartlessness—Luther and Calvin compared—Early liberties of Geneva—The “Libertines”—Blue laws—Spy system—Persecution—Death of Gruet—Burning of Servetus—Hallam’s testimony—Morals of Calvin—His zeal—His complicated diseases—His last will—His awful death and mysterious burial—A douceur—The inference.

THE second great branch of the German Reformation was that established at Geneva by John Calvin. Of all the reformers, he was perhaps the most acute, learned, and talented. And he has succeeded, better perhaps than any of them all, in impressing his own stern and morose character on the sect he founded. Geneva was the center of his operations, as Wittenberg was of those of Luther, and Zurich, of those of Zuingli. Starting from Geneva, Calvinism soon spread through Switzerland, and it afterwards extended to France, Holland, Scotland, and England. Even on the soil of Germany itself, it was soon able to dispute the supremacy with the sect previously established by Luther. We have deferred till now our account of the origin and progress of Calvinism, because we intend to view it chiefly in its bearing on the subjects treated of in the two last chapters—civil and religious liberty. Besides, in point of time, it is posterior to the branches of the Reformation established respectively by Luther and Zuingli.

Much additional light has been lately shed on the history of early Calvinism. Protestant as well as Catholic historians have labored with great success in this interesting field. Among the former, we mention as among the most distinguished, Galiffe, Gaberel, and Fazy. These three learned

Protestants have all greatly contributed to elucidate the history of Geneva in the sixteenth century. The last named published in 1838 at Geneva, his *Essay on the History of the Genevan Republic*,\* in which he enlarges on the influence of Calvinism on the destinies of the republic. The work of Gaberel, entitled *Calvin at Geneva*,† enters still more directly into the subject, and furnishes many additional details.

But, for ability, and research into the history of early Calvinism, they are both perhaps surpassed by Galiffe. His three volumes of *Genealogical Notices of Genevan Families*,‡ unfold much of the secret history of Geneva under the theocracy of Calvin. He has ferreted out and published to the world the famous Registers of the Genevan ecclesiastical consistory and cantonal council during the sixteenth century. These had been long lost to the world. The friends of Calvin seem to have carefully concealed them, out of respect to the character of their father in the faith.

When, some years ago, Vemet requested the Genevan secretary of state, Chapeaurouge, to communicate to him the order of proceedings touching Servetus, the council of state, to whom the matter was referred, refused to grant the request. However, Calandrini, the syndic of Geneva, answered, that "the conduct of Calvin and of the council in that affair were such, that they wished to bury it in deep oblivion."§ But thanks to the indefatigable researches of Galiffe, and to the growing indifference of the ministers of Geneva for the memory of Calvin, those long hidden records of the political and religious history of Geneva during Calvin's lifetime, have been at length revealed to the world. A Protestant has thus removed the dark veil which had hung over the cradle of Calvinism for centuries.

---

\* "*Essai d'un précis de l'Histoire de la Rép. Genevoise*," 2 vols., 8vo.

† "*Calvin à Geneve*," 8vo. 1836.

‡ "*Notices Généalogiques sur les Familles Genevoises*," 3 vols. 1831, 1836

§ The letter of the syndic is published in full by Galiffe in his "*Notices*," *sup. cit.*

In his life of Calvin,\* Audin has availed himself of the labors of all his predecessors in this interesting branch of religious history. He had previously qualified himself for his task by much patient labor and research. He assures us that there was not a library of any note in France or Germany which he did not visit.† In his travels, he discovered many letters of Calvin hitherto unpublished. Among these is his famous letter to Farel, which he found in the hand-writing of Calvin himself, in the royal library at Paris.‡ The publication of this letter—which is of undoubted genuineness§—has rendered manifest what before was strongly suspected—the agency of Calvin in compassing the death of Servetus.

In what we will have to say on the history of the Reformation at Geneva, we shall follow all these authors. More particularly will we avail ourselves of the facts disclosed by the learned and pains-taking Audin. Our plan does not of course require, nor will the limits of a single chapter permit, any very lengthy details on the history of early Calvinism. The character of this branch of the Reformation, is, in fact, nearly the same as that of those of Wittenberg and Zurich, of which we have already treated at some length. Similar means were also adopted to bring it about. Its effects on society, as we shall endeavor to show, were also nearly the same.

John Calvin was born at Noyon, in France, on the 10th of July, 1509, and he died at Geneva, on the 19th of May, 1564, in the fifty-fifth year of his age. The first feature which strikes us in his character, is his untiring industry and restless activity. Whether we view him as a student frequenting the schools of Paris, as a minister at Geneva, concerting with the

---

\* "Histoire de la Vie, des Ouvrages et des Doctrines de Calvin"—Par Audin, auteur de "l'Histoire de Luther,"—2 vols., 8vo. Paris, 1843. This work has been translated into English by the present distinguished bishop of Richmond. Our quotations are from the original.

† Introduction, p. 19.

‡ Published in full, vol. ii, p. 313, seqq.

§ See Hallam—Hist of Literature, vol. i, p. 280.—Note.

ministers Farel and Froment his plans for carrying out the Reformation, as an exile at Strasburg, intermeddling with the affairs of German diets and German reformers, or, after his return to Geneva from the exile into which his own restlessness had driven him;—throughout his whole life, in fact, he is the same busy, intriguing, restless character. He was never asleep at his post; he was always on the alert; he toiled day and night in carrying out his plans.

He was as cool and calculating as he was active. He seldom failed, by one means or another, to put down an enemy—and every opponent was *his* enemy—because he could seldom be taken at a disadvantage. His vigilance detected their plans, and his prompt activity generally thwarted them. Though very irritable, and inexorable in his anger, yet his passion did not cloud his understanding, nor hinder the carrying out of his deliberate purpose. In temperament he was cold and repulsive, even sour and morose. He mingled little with others, and was as reserved in his conversation as he was fond of retirement and study.

If he had any heart, he never gave evidence of the fact by the manifestation of feeling. At the death of his first and only child, he appears to have shed not one tear. In a letter to the minister Viret, he coldly informed him of the fact, and invited him to pay him a visit at Strasburg, telling him, as an inducement to come, “that they could enjoy themselves, and talk together for half a day.”\* He never manifested the least sympathy for those in distress, though in many cases he was himself the cause of their sufferings. Thus, when Servetus, on hearing that he was condemned to the stake, gave way to his feelings in a burst of agony and tears, Calvin mocked at his distress by writing to one of his friends “that he bellowed after the manner of a Spaniard—mercy, mercy.”†

\* See Audin, *Vie de Calvin*, vol. i, p. 351, note, for Calvin's words.

† “Ut tantum Hispanico more reboaret: Misericordia, misericordia!”  
Ibid., vol. ii, p. 304.

Thus also, when Castalio, one of the most excellent men and accomplished scholars of his age, was on the very verge of starvation at Berne, whither he had repaired to escape Calvin's persecution at Geneva, the reformer had the cold-heartedness to remind him that he had fed at his table in Strasburg; and, to do away with the effect of Castalio's arguments, which he found it difficult to answer, he even accused him of theft! To the first charge Castalio answered, "I lodged with you, it is true, about a week . . . but I paid you for what I had eaten. How cordially you and Beza hate me."\* The charge of theft he indignantly repelled as follows: "And who told that? Your spies have deceived you. Reduced to the most frightful misery . . . I took a hook, and went to gather the wood which floated upon the Rhine, which belonged to no one, and which I fished up, and burnt afterwards at my house to warm myself. Do you call this theft?"† Castalio, thus hunted down by his inexorable enemy, literally died of hunger while struggling to maintain by his learning a wife and eight children. But he had had the misfortune to differ with Calvin on predestination while at Geneva, and the boldness to reprove him and his colleagues with an intolerant spirit.—"Paul," he had told them, "chastised himself, you torment others."‡

Calvin's personal appearance was an index to his character. He was of middle height, of a lean and supple figure, with a contracted chest, with the veins of his neck full and prominent, his mouth well made and large, his lips bluish, his forehead expanded, bony, and furrowed with wrinkles, his eye restless, and, when he was excited, darting fire. His ceaseless labors caused him to become prematurely gray, and gave him a pale and cadaverous aspect. He was a man from whose appearance you would expect little that was not the result of hard labor.

---

\* Castalio—*Defensio*, pp. 26, 40.—*Apud Audin, ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 239.

† *Defens.*, p. 12, *ibid.* p. 240.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

What a contrast between him and Luther! Luther, a creature of impulse, a portly ex-friar, fond of good cheer, and never more at home than when conversing with boon companions at his favorite resort, the Black Eagle tavern: Calvin, meager, silent, and morose, shut up within himself, chilling all with his reserve—all head and no heart. In the pulpit the difference was equally marked. Luther spoke extemporaneously, and, without method or choice of words, bore down all before him by a torrent of passionate invective or boisterous declamation. Calvin was cold and unimpassioned, his diction was pure and polished, his thoughts clear and precise, and his whole manner calculated to make a more deep and lasting impression on his hearers. Calvin's was the eloquence of the head, Luther's that of the heart.

But they agreed in one thing, if in little else: they both crushed the liberties of the people in the countries which were the respective theaters of their labors. Their profession of breaking the bonds of religious slavery, and of securing political freedom to the people, was all mere talk. It is too late in the day to hold them up as the champions of popular rights. The effect of the Reformation, both at Wittenberg and at Geneva, was obviously to weaken the democratic principle; in both places the rights of the lower orders were ruthlessly trampled under foot. In Germany, Luther conjured up a storm which he could not control. We have already shown how he first stirred up the people to revolt, and then clamored for their blood, and how completely he succeeded in destroying their liberties. Calvin also crushed the liberties of the people, but in a more insidious manner: he robbed them of their liberty in the name of *liberty*. A foreigner, he insinuated himself into Geneva, and, serpent-like, coiled himself around the very heart of the republic which had given him hospitable shelter, and had adopted him; nor did he relax his hold so long as he lived. He thus stung the very bosom which had warmed him. That this language

is not too strong, the following plain statement of facts will sufficiently show.

The cantons of Switzerland formed one of the many republics of the middle ages. They owed all their liberties, and even their very existence as a distinct government, to Catholics in Catholic times. William Tell, Melchtal, and Furst were the fathers of Swiss liberty. In 1307 was fought by these heroes the famous battle of Morgarten, which drove the Austrians from Switzerland, and secured Swiss independence. The bishops of Geneva had been its earliest and greatest benefactors. They had more than once protected the rights of the city against the aggressions of the dukes of Savoy themselves. One of them—Adhemar Fabri—as early as 1387, had written out the laws and privileges of the city; and the book was venerated as containing the magna charta of Genevan liberties. Those laws provided that the citizens had the sole right of inflicting capital punishment; that none should be tortured without the consent of the people; that, from the rising to the setting of the sun, the citizens were the sole guardians of the city; that no agent of the duke or bishop could exercise any power during that time, and that the citizens alone had the right to elect their burgomasters.\*

Calvin soon trampled upon every one of these cherished popular privileges. At the instigation of the ministers Farel and Froment, Geneva had already cast off the mild yoke of her episcopal court. Instead of it, she was doomed to wear, firmly riveted on her neck, the iron yoke of Calvin's consistory. This spiritual court of Calvin's devising gradually monopolized all power in Geneva. The hitherto free council of the burgomasters became a mere tool in its hands. With its manifold appliances of preachers, elders, and spies, it pen-

---

\* Hottinger, *Hist. des Eglises de la Suisse*; Audin, vol. ii, p. 15. Those laws are written in the quaint old Latin of that period, and they present a strange mixture of the old Savoyard Patois with the classical Latin. The style is very similar to that of the English Magna Charta.

etrated everywhere, and struck terror into every bosom. The pulpit was then a powerful instrument in the hands of the police. Every one trembled at the denunciation of the ministers, for it was almost sure to be followed by ulterior consequences in the social and civil order.

Whoever will read Audin's book, and the Protestant historians referred to above, must be convinced of the truth of these remarks. Our limits will not allow copious details; we must confine ourselves to some of the more prominent facts in support of the strong statement just made.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century, Geneva was one of the great commercial centers of Europe. Occupying a central position between Italy, Germany, and France, it was a common mart for the goods of all these countries. The enterprising flocked thither from almost every part of Europe. It became also a city of refuge for all the uneasy and restless spirits, who, in consequence of religious or political intrigues, had been forced to leave their own country. The population of Geneva was, on this account, of a most motley character. Calvin was among the many French refugees who took shelter there. Before his arrival, the Reformation had been already begun through the agency of Farel and Froment. Its course had been marked, as elsewhere, by pillage of the churches, by seizure of church property, by destruction of works of art, by robbery and sacrilege, and by massacres. La Sœur Jeanne de Jussie, a nun of St. Clare, an eye-witness of these horrors, and a sufferer by them, has left a most graphic description of them, and Audin has given us an abstract of her interesting work.\*

Such was the state of things when Calvin came to Geneva. Among its citizens, the mechanics and common laborers formed a numerous class. These constituted too a distinct political party, who viewed with an evil eye the ascendancy acquired by Calvin and the other foreign refugees. Calvin

---

\* Audin, vol. i, p. 195 to 215.



could not brook them, and he styled them sneeringly the party of the *Libertines*. The history of his protracted and bitter contest with them forms the matter of many long and highly interesting chapters in Audin's book.\* The high-priest of Geneva could not bear them, because, in their evening-parties, they took the unwarrantable liberty of laughing at him—at his cadaverous figure, his withered hands, and his nasal twang in the pulpit; and because they had even gone so far as to call him “le renard François, or the French fox.”†

Besides, they had the unpardonable effrontery to drink healths, to dance, and otherwise amuse themselves when the labors of the day were over. Calvin's sour and morose temperament could ill brook this social cheerfulness, and especially the witty or malicious sallies at his own expense. Besides, he was troubled with the asthma, and was subject to vertigo and headache.—And what right had those vulgar clowns to shock his nerves, or to disturb his sleep? What right had they to their old and long-cherished national amusements, if it was in the least displeasing to the humor of this splenetic stranger? What right had they to sing, or to laugh at his peculiarities? If it was not downright blasphemy, as the ministers more than once intimated from the pulpit, it was at least very impolite in them not to wear longer faces, at least while *he* was in the city.

Calvin determined to put down the Libertines; and, the better to effect his purpose, he procured the enactment of a body of laws, of which we will here give a few specimens. They show us what was the spirit, and what was the legislation of Calvinism from its very birth.

“They punished with imprisonment the lady who arranged her hair with too much coquetry (the ministers were to judge), and even her chambermaid who assisted at her toilet; the merchant who played at cards, the peasant who spoke too harshly to his beast, and the citizen who had not extinguished his lamp at the hour appointed by law.”‡—“Men were forbidden to dance

---

\* Audin, chapters i, vi, viii, and xv of vol. ii.

† Ibid., vol. ii, p. 13, seq.

‡ Ibid. vol. ii, p. 12.

with women, or to wear figured hose, or flowered breeches."\*—"Three tanners were put in prison for three days, on bread and water, for having eaten at breakfast three dozen pieces of pastry, which was great dissoluteness."†—"They forbade any one to have a cross, or any other badge of popery."—"A merchant who sold wafers marked with a cross was fined sixty sols, and his wafers were cast into the fire as scandalous."‡

"Woe to him who did not uncover his head at the approach of Calvin; he was fined. Woe to him that gave him a flat contradiction; he was brought before the consistory, and menaced with excommunication.§ Woe to the girl who presented herself to be married with a bunch of flowers in her bonnet, if her chastity was even suspected by the consistory. Woe to him who danced on the day of his marriage; he was imprisoned for three days. Woe to the young married lady if she wore shoes according to the present fashion of Berne: she was publicly reprimanded."||

This minute and vexatious Calvinistic legislation regulated even the number of plates which should appear on the table of the rich, and the quality of butter to be sold, etc.¶

"All were ordered to eat meat on Fridays and Saturdays, under penalty of imprisonment: and the night-watch was ordered to proclaim that no one should make slashed doublets or hose, or wear them hereafter under penalty of sixty sols."\*\*—"Chapius was put in prison for having persisted in calling his child Claud, although the minister wished to call him Abraham. He had said that, rather than do this, he would keep his child fifteen years without baptism.†† He was kept in prison four days."—"One day a relation presented himself at the altar with a young girl of Nantes to be married. The minister, Abel Poupin, asked him: Will you be faithful to your wife? The bridegroom instead of answering yes, only inclined his head. Hence great tumult among the assistants. He was sent to prison, obliged to ask pardon of the young lady's uncle, and condemned to bread and water."‡‡

We might multiply facts of the kind, to exhibit still further the peculiarities of this singular code. The pious Calvinistic legislators who enacted the *blue* laws of Connecticut could at least boast precedent if not common sense, for

\* Audin, vol. ii, p. 138, from Register of Geneva, 1522, July 14.

† Ibid. Register, 13th, February, 1558.

‡ Ibid., p. 173.

§ Ibid. Register, 31st Dec. 1543.

¶ Reglement de Police, 29th July, 1549, *ibid.*

¶ Ibid.

\*\* Register, 16th April, 1543; Audin, vol. ii, p. 185.

†† Register, 1546; *ibid.*

‡‡ Ibid., p. 186.

their curious enactments. The above, however, are but small scraps of Genevese legislation under Calvin's theocracy. To understand fully the spirit of his laws, in all their length and breadth, you must read the criminal prosecutions of Berthelier, Gruet, Gentilis, Bolsec, Ami Perrin, Francis Favre, and Servetus, copious portions of which are spread before us by Audin, from the original documents. We may have occasion to refer to some of these a little later.

. To ferret out and punish the infractors of these singular laws, Calvin established a regular system of espionage.

"He kept in his pay secret informers, in order to learn the secrets of families."\*—"Besides these, there was another band of spies, the elders, recognized by law, who could penetrate once a week into the most mysterious sanctuary of domestic life, in order to report to the consistory what they might see and hear."†—"In one single year, the consistory instituted more than two hundred prosecutions for blasphemy, calumny, obscene language, lechery, *insults to Calvin, offenses against the ministers*, and attempts against the French exiles."‡

The liberties of the city were now totally crushed, and every one trembled for his life! The spies whom Calvin employed were chiefly from among the most degraded of the French refugees; and this odious practice was carried to such lengths that the citizens trembled at the approach of one of these sinister individuals. A curious instance of the proceedings of these miscreants is found in the Registers of Geneva.

"Master Raymond, a spy, was passing by the bridge, when he heard a voice saying 'Go to the devil!'—'Who is that?' asked Raymond of Dominic Clement, who was present. Dominic answered: "'Tis a girl who is wishing the 'Renard,' or 'Fox,' at the devil.' Raymond thought the man meant to insult him: 'You are a fox yourself,' says he to Dominic, who answered, 'I am as good a man as you are, and have not at least been banished from my country.' Dominic was denounced to the consistory, which sharply reproved him. On his wishing to justify himself, Calvin silenced him, saying, 'Hush, you have blasphemed against God in saying I have not been banished.'"§

\* Audin, vol. ii, p. 149.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid., p. 150.

§ Ibid., p. 167.

Our historian furnishes us with a number of such facts. Every enemy of Calvin was closely watched, and could scarcely escape being denounced. Woe to him who smiled while Calvin was preaching, even though he treated his hearers as "letchers, blasphemers, and dogs." "Three persons who had smiled at a sermon of Calvin, on seeing a man fall from his chair asleep, were denounced, condemned to three days of imprisonment on bread and water, and to beg pardon."\* These spies laid snares for the simple. "They asked a Norman who was going to Montpellier, whether he intended to change his religion." The Norman replied, "I dont think the Church is so narrowly bounded, as to hang from the girdle of M. Calvin." He was denounced and banished!†

Talk of the Spanish Inquisition after this! And yet these are not the darkest shades of the picture. Far from it. They are but mere trifles, when compared with the horrible facts developed in the criminal prosecutions alluded to above. Whosoever opposed Calvin, whether in religion or in politics, was hunted down and his blood was sought at his instigation. He never forgave a personal injury. In regard to his enemies, he was as watchful as a tiger preparing to pounce on its prey—and as treacherous! This is strong language; but it is more than justified by the official records of Geneva. We will present a few of the more striking facts in confirmation of our statement.

How sanguinary, for instance, is the spirit breathed in this extract of Calvin's letter to the Marquis de Pouet!

"Do not hesitate to rid the country of those fanatical fellows (*faquins*), who in their conversation seek to excite the people against us, who blacken our conduct, and would fain make our belief pass as a revery: *such monsters ought to be strangled*, AS I DID, IN THE EXECUTION OF MICHAEL SERVETUS, THE SPANIARD."‡

His vindictive conduct towards Pierre Ameaux, a member of the Genevan council of twenty-five, is a fit commentary on this sentiment. At a supper, this man, inflamed with

---

\* Audin, vol. ii, p. 171.

† Ibid., p. 179.

‡ Ibid., p. 172.

wine, had said some hard things of Calvin. At his table, another man, Henry de la Mar, had also said, amidst the general applause of the guests: "That Calvin was a spiteful and vindictive man, who never pardoned any one against whom he had a grudge."—The next morning, Ameaux was cited before the council, where he excused himself on the ground that he was excited with wine. The council fined him thirty thalers—a large sum at that time. "On hearing of this sentence, Calvin arose, donned his doctor's dress, and escorted by the ministers and elders, penetrated into the hall of the council, demanded justice in the name of that God whom Pierre Ameaux had outraged, in the name of the morals he had sullied, and of the laws he had violated; and declared that he would quit Geneva, if the man were not compelled to make the amende honorable—a public apology, bareheaded, at the city hotel," and in two other public places! The council yielded; and "the next day, Ameaux, half naked, with a torch in his hand, accused himself in a loud voice of having knowingly and wickedly offended God, and begged pardon of his fellow-citizens."\*—What is to be thought of a man, who could thus crush a penitent and stricken enemy! Had he aught of the spirit of that God-Man who "would not break the bruised reed?"

Henry la Mar, the other culprit, did not escape. He was dogged by Texier, one of Calvin's spies, who extracted from his lips, under an oath of secrecy, some words disrespectful to his master. Texier came running to Calvin with the news, saying that he did not think himself bound by his oath, when the public good required the disclosure. "Calvin accused La Mar, caused him to lose his situation, and had him condemned to prison for three days. The judges assigned as their reason, 'that he had blamed M. Calvin!'"†

---

\* See the whole account, from original documents, in Audin, vol. ii, p. 181, seq., where also a number of similar facts are recounted.

† Audin, vol. ii, p. 184.

Of a similar character was the prosecution, commenced at the instance of Calvin, against Francis Favre, a veteran soldier of the republic, and a counselor of the city. He had been at a wedding where they had danced all the evening, and where he was accused by one of Calvin's spies of having used seditious language. Among the ten specifications alleged against him, were several things he had said against Calvin; and the last and most grievous was, that he had, on being conducted to prison, cried out: "LIBERTY! LIBERTY!! I would give a thousand dollars to have a general council!" (of the burgomasters.) He was sentenced to beg pardon publicly. The veteran refused; he was sent to prison for three weeks, and was then liberated only at the instance of a deputation from Berne.\*

Calvin also sought the life of Ami Perrin, the captain-general of Geneva. Perrin's wife had been guilty of dancing on the territory of Berne. Calvin sought to entrap Perrin by means of Megret, one of his hired spies. This miscreant denounced Perrin before the council; and he was in consequence thrown into prison. Calvin thirsted for his blood. But the people loved Perrin. The council of the two hundred assembled to try him for his life. A reaction took place; Perrin was about to be liberated, and Megret was openly denounced. At this juncture, Calvin entered the council hall. The people received him with cries of "death to Calvin!" Calvin waved his hand, addressed them, and calmed their fury; but he barely succeeded by his eloquence in saving his own life!†

In reading these details, we are almost reminded of Marat and Robespierre haranguing the Jacobin clubs during the reign of terror. In fact, Calvin's reign in Geneva was truly a reign of terror; and if during it, as much blood did not

---

\* Audin, vol. ii, p. 189, seq.

† Ibid., p. 196, seq. By his overweening influence, Calvin however succeeded in having Perrin afterwards tried, when, though his life was spared, he was deprived of the place of captain-general; *ibid.*, p. 197, seq.

flow as during the French Revolution, it was not surely his fault. He combined the cruelty of Danton and Robespierre, with the eloquence of Marat and Mirabeau, though he was much cooler, and therefore more successful than any one of them all.

Who will not be stricken with horror on reading of the cold-blooded cruelty with which he hunted down and compassed the death of poor Gruet, the poet!\* This unfortunate man was accused of having affixed a placard on Calvin's pulpit at St. Peter's church, in which the reformer was severely handled. He was apprehended and his papers were seized. Among these, consisting of nothing but loose sheets, were found some scraps of poetry and other fugitive pieces, which were tortured into heresy and treason. He was plied with the torture by Calvin's creature, Colladon, every day for a whole month. They wished him to implicate Favre or Perin; but though he cried out in agony of torture: "Finish me, I beseech you—I am dying;" he remained firm, and would not accuse them. The council pronounced sentence of death on him. Among the charges against him, the principal were: "That he had endeavored to ruin the authority of the consistory—that he had menaced the ministers, and spoken ill of Calvin—and that he had conspired with the king of France against the safety of Calvin and of the state."† Gruet died on the scaffold, but Calvin was not yet satisfied. He wished that his writings should be condemned, and he himself drew up a long form of condemnation of them, which was approved by the council.‡ Calvin alone is responsible for the blood of Gruet; it still cries aloud to heaven against him!

We might exhibit similar hard-heartedness and tyranny in his persecution of Bolsec,§ of Gentilis, of Berthillier,|| and

---

\* He was not poet enough to excite much envy. † Audin, p. 200, seqq.

‡ This document, found at Berne in the handwriting of Calvin, is given in full by Audin, *ibid.*, p. 244, seqq.

§ *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 245, seqq.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 347, seqq.

of others. But we are heart-sick of these horrors, and must hasten on. Yet we can not wholly pass over the well-known case of Servetus, to which Audin devotes two whole chapters,\* and upon which he sheds much additional light. We will state only a few undoubted and prominent facts in this sad affair.

1st. Servetus was burnt on the 27th of October, 1553; but as early as 1546—seven years previously—Calvin had thirsted for his blood, as appears from these words, taken from his famous letter to Farel, written in that year: “If he (Servetus) come here (to Geneva), and my authority be considered, I will not permit him to escape with his life.”†

2d. Pursuing this blood-thirsty purpose, he had denounced Servetus to the police of Lyons, where he then was. And when he (Servetus) had fled to Vienne, he very narrowly escaped—probably with the connivance of the Catholic clergy of Vienne—from the prison to which he had been consigned, at the instigation of officers sent in quest of him in consequence of his denunciation, by Calvin’s agents, at Lyons.‡

3d. When Servetus, fleeing from his enemies, passed through Geneva, Calvin denounced him and had him arrested, against all the laws both of God and of man.§ For Servetus was a stranger, only passing through Geneva;|| and he was not responsible to the Genevan tribunals for a crime which he had not committed within the Genevan territory; and this, even supposing heresy to be a crime punishable by the civil laws.

4th. Though Servetus was a poor stranger, and though he begged for counsel to defend him, that right, not denied even to the meanest culprit, was refused him at the instance of Calvin.¶

\* Audin, chapters xii and xiii of vol. ii, p. 258 to 324.

† See the letter in full, *ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 314, seqq. ‡ *Ibid.*, vol. ii, 285, seqq.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 287, seqq.

|| Bancroft assigns this same reason: “Servetus did but desire leave to continue his journey.” *Hist. United States*, vol. i, p. 455.

¶ Audin, vol. ii, p. 297.



5th. After Servetus had lain in prison five weeks, a victim of disease and devoured by vermin, he wrote to the council, stating his situation, and begging for a change of linen. The council wished to grant his request, but Calvin opposed it, and he succeeded! Three other letters written during the following week from prison, in which Servetus begged for counsel, and asked that the charges against him should be specified and made known to him, were answered by—silence.\*

6th. When, on the morning of his execution, Servetus sent for Calvin, and begged his pardon, if he had offended him, Calvin answered him with cold-hearted cruelty.† We have seen above how he insulted his tears.

7th. The heartless cruelty of the minister Farel, who accompanied Servetus to execution, is enough to make one's blood run cold at the bare reading of it.‡

8th. The year after the execution of Servetus—in 1554—Calvin published his famous work on punishing heretics,§ in which he justified the whole proceeding by the authority of Scripture!

Was this man sent to reform the Church of God? He was worse than “the Caliph of Geneva,” as Audin calls him—he was a very Nero! Gibbon has well said of this transaction: “I am more deeply scandalized at the single execution of Servetus than at the hecatombs (not true) which have blazed at auto da fés of Spain and Portugal.”

Hallam gives the following account of the burning of Servetus:

“Servetus, having, in 1553, published at Vienne, in Dauphiné, a new treatise, called *Christianismi Restitutio*, and escaping from thence, as he vainly hoped, to the Protestant city of Geneva, became a victim to the bigotry of the magistrates, *instigated by Calvin, who had acquired an immense ascendancy over that republic.*”||—And in a note he brings abundant proof of

\* Audin, vol. ii, p. 299, seq.

† See the whole conversation, *ibid.*, p. 305.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 304, seq.

§ *De Hæreticis Puniendis.*

|| *History of Literature*, vol. i, p. 280.

all this, alleging, among other things, the famous letter of Calvin to Farel, "published," he says, "by Witenbogat (a Protestant) in an ecclesiastical history, written in Dutch."—In the same note he says: "Servetus, in fact, was burned not so much for his heresies, as for *personal offense he had several years before given to Calvin*. . . . Servetus had, in some printed letters, charged Calvin with many errors, which seems to have *exasperated the great (!) reformer's temper*, so as to make him resolve on what he afterwards executed."—"The death of Servetus," he continues, "has perhaps as many circumstances of aggravation as any execution for heresy that ever took place. One of these, and among the most striking, is that he was not the subject of Geneva, nor domiciled in the city, nor had the *Christianismi Restitutio* been published there, but at Vienne. According to our laws, and those, I believe, of most civilized nations, he was not amenable to the tribunals of the republic."\*—He concludes the entire account with this sweeping accusation against all the early reformers in regard to intolerance: "Thus, in the second period of the Reformation, those ominous symptoms which had appeared in its earliest stage, disunion, virulence, bigotry, intolerance, far from yielding to any benignant influence, grew more inveterate and incurable."†

We think that the above facts make good our assertion, that Calvin crushed the liberties of Geneva, political as well as religious. The following may serve to show us how sincere was his zeal for the salvation of souls.

The plague broke out at Geneva in 1543. The ministers from the pulpit recommended prayer *once a week* to avert the scourge, and they appointed the Sunday week next following as the day for administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper with the same intent.‡ The plague continued, and the ministers hid themselves, though hundreds were calling on them for spiritual succor in their dying moments! The hospital was crowded with the dying. The council of state called on the ministers to send one of their number to assist the dying at the hospital, from which duty, however, they wished "to exempt Calvin, because the church had need of him!" The ministers met with Calvin, and agreed to decide by lot who was to go. One only, Geneston, offered to go, if

---

\* History of Literature, vol. i, p. 280.

, Ibid., p. 281.

‡ Register, etc., Audin, vol. ii, p. 16.

the lot fell on him! The others "confessed that God had not yet given them grace to have the strength and courage to go to the hospital!" And "it was resolved to pray to God to give them more courage for the future."\* The result was that no one went to the hospital, except Chatillon, a young French poet, and another Frenchman, who fell a victim to the disease. Were these men true shepherds, or were they only mercenaries? The answer may be found in the tenth chapter of St. John's Gospel.

Calvin's morals have been discussed on both sides. Beza and his other friends have held him up as a model of perfection; others, with Bolsec, have represented him as a monster of impurity and iniquity. The story of his having been guilty of a crime of nameless turpitude at Noyon, though denied by his friends, yet rests upon very respectable authority. Bolsec, a contemporary writer, relates it as certain. Before his work appeared, it had been mentioned by Surius in 1558; by Turbes, who lived in the reign of Francis I.; by Simon Fontana in 1557; by Stapleton in 1558; by La Vacquerie in 1560-1; by De Mouchi in 1562; by Du Prèau in 1567; and by Whitaker before 1570.† The learned and careful Protestant Galiffe, who had examined most thoroughly the archives of Geneva, uses this very plain language:

"The history of many of the reformer's colleagues is very scandalous, the details of which can not enter into a work designed for both sexes."‡ The same writer tells us "that most of the facts related by the physician of Lyons (Bolsec) are perfectly true."§

In the introduction to the third volume of his *Notices*, he bears the following testimony to the state of morals at Geneva in Calvin's time:

"To those who imagine that the reformer had done nothing that is not good, I will exhibit our Registers covered with entries of illegitimate chil-

---

\* Audin, Register of Council.

† See *ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 256. Note.

‡ Galiffe, *Notices*, tom. iii, p. 381. Note—quoted *ibid.*

§ *Ibid.*, p. 457, note. Audin, vol. ii, p. 257.

dren—(these were exposed at all the corners of the city and country,) with prosecutions hideous for their obscenity, with wills in which fathers and mothers accuse their own children not only of errors, but of crimes, with transactions before notaries public between young girls and their paramours, who gave them, in the presence of their relatives, means of supporting their illegitimate offspring, with multitudes of forced marriages, where the delinquents were conducted from prison to the church, with mothers who abandoned their infants at the hospital, while they were living in abundance with a second husband, with whole bundles of processes between brothers, with multitudes (literally heaps, *tas*) of secret denunciations: and all this in the generation nourished by the mystic manna of Calvin!”\*

Truly, if the Registers prove all this, we may conclude that Calvin stamped his own image upon his generation, and especially his heartlessness. Such facts as these, resting as they do upon the undoubted authority of the official records of Geneva, speak volumes in regard to the moral influence of that gloomy system of religionism which Calvin introduced into that city, as a substitute for the Catholic religion. They prove that the boasted austerity of the early Calvinists was little better than a sham, if it was not even a cloak to cover enormous wickedness. They exhibit their own favorite doctrine of total depravity in its fullest practical development!

The accounts published of the circumstances attending the last sickness and death of Calvin are various and contradictory. His disciple Beza, who wrote his life, represents his death as worthy of an apostle and of a saint. Yet even he, as we shall see, furnishes us with some particulars which would make us distrust the truth of this flattering picture. The diseases which led to his dissolution were many and complicated. In a letter to the physicians of Montpelier, written a short time before his death, Calvin gives a full account of the maladies with which he was tormented. Among these, he mentions “the dropsy, the stone, the gravel, colics, hemorrhoids, internal hemorrhages, quartan fever, cramps, spasmodic contractions of the muscles from the foot

---

\* Galiffe, Notices, tom. iii, p. 15. Apud Audin, vol. ii, p. 174.

to the knee, and, during the whole summer, a frightful neuralgia or nervous affection.”\*

His malady increasing, he dictated his last will and testament on the 26th of April, 1564. The greater part of this curious instrument is devoted to a defense of his conduct and motives throughout life!† He “protests that he has endeavored, according to the measure of grace given to him, to teach with purity the word of God, as well in his sermons as in his writings, and to expound faithfully the Holy Scriptures. And that, in all the disputes which he had had with the enemies of truth, he had employed neither chicanery nor sophistry, but had proceeded roundly (*rondement*) to maintain the quarrel of God.” In disposing of his effects, towards the close of his will, he thus speaks of his nephew: “As to my nephew David . . . because he has been light and volatile, I leave him only twenty-five crowns (*ecus*) as a chastisement.”

On the morning of the 27th of May, at eight o'clock, he breathed his last, after having passed a night of horrible agony. The circumstances of his death and burial were hidden and mysterious. His body was immediately covered, and his funeral was hastened: it took place at two o'clock in the afternoon of the same day. Beza,‡ his favorite disciple, thus writes on the subject:

“There were many strangers come from a distance, who wished greatly to see him, although he was dead, and made instance to that effect. . . . But, to obviate all calumnies, he was put into the coffin at eight o'clock in the morning, and at two o'clock in the evening was carried in the ordinary manner, as he himself had directed, to the common cemetery, called ‘*Plein Palais*,’ without any pomp or parade, where he lies at the present day, awaiting the resurrection.”

The “calumnies” to which Beza refers were probably the public rumors spread through the city regarding the manner of the reformer’s death.

\* See his letter in Audin, vol. ii, p. 452, seq.

† It is given in full by Audin, *ibid.*, p. 456, seq.

‡ Vie de Calvin, apud Audin.

"It was said that every one had been prohibited from entering into his chamber, because the body of the deceased bore traces of a desperate struggle with death, and of a premature decomposition, in which the eye would have seen either visible signs of the divine vengeance, or marks of a shameful disease; and that in consequence a black veil was hastily thrown over the face of the corpse, and that he was interred before the rumor of his death had spread through the city. So fearful were his friends of indiscreet looks!"\*

The mystery seems, however, to have been penetrated by Haren, a young student who had visited Geneva to take lessons from Calvin. He penetrated into the chamber of the dying man, and he has furnished the following evidence of what he saw on the occasion. And we beg our readers to bear in mind that he was no enemy, but a partisan of Calvin, and that his testimony was wholly voluntary.

"Calvin, ending his life in despair, died of a most shameful and disgusting disease, which God has threatened to rebellious and accursed reprobates, having been first tortured in the most excruciating manner, and consumed, to which fact I can testify most certainly, for I, being present, saw with these eyes his most sad and tragical death—*exitum et exitium*."†

In thus presenting to our readers a condensed and necessarily imperfect summary of facts, many of them extracted from the public and official acts of the Genevan council and consistory in the sixteenth century, we would not be understood as wishing to reflect upon the character or conduct of the present professors of Calvinistic doctrines, many of whom are men estimable for their civic virtues. It is not our fault that the truth of history will not warrant a better character of Calvin. He was the most subtle, the most untiring, and perhaps the most able enemy of the Catholic Church. He played a public and conspicuous part in the great religious-political drama of the sixteenth century; he was the founder of a sect more distinguished than any other, perhaps, for its

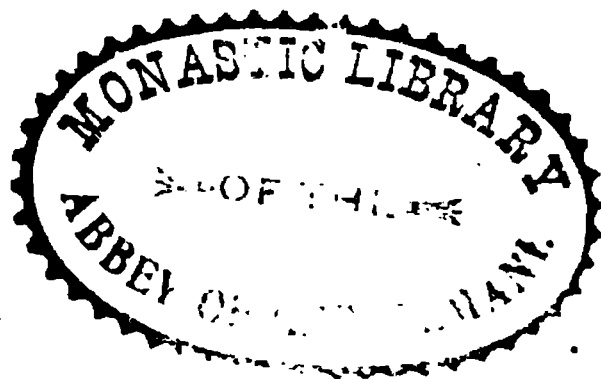
---

\* Audin, vol. ii, p. 464, seq.

† Johannes Harennius, apud Petrum Cutzenum. We have endeavored to give above a literal translation of his testimony, of which the original is in Latin. Ibid.

inveterate opposition to Catholicity. Under these circumstances, his life, acts, and whole character, are surely public property; and truth and justice required that they should be given to the public. This is precisely what Audin, and the Protestant historians of Geneva, Galiffe, and Gaberel, have done; and, treading in their footsteps, we have only given a brief abstract of the result of their labors.

Among the many proofs that the Catholic Church is the true Church of Christ, not the least striking is the fact, vouched for by authentic history, that all those who have left her bosom, and established religious sects, were men of either very doubtful, or of notoriously wicked and immoral characters. It is contrary to the order of God's providence to have selected men of this stamp, to become the reformers of His Church. This would derogate from his sanctity, and would reflect upon a religion which could be established, or *reformed*, by such instruments. This principle being once admitted, the inference from it is obvious. Whenever a change in religion—call it reformation, or what you will—has been effected by men not remarkable for their sanctity, the fact of itself presents strong presumptive evidence that the change is not from God. If the men who effected it were notoriously flagitious, as most of the self-styled reformers of the sixteenth century certainly were, then the presumption grows into a moral certainty. Judged by this test, Calvinism was surely not the work of God.



## CHAPTER XV.

## INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON LITERATURE.

"The march of intellect! what know we now  
Of moral, or of thought and sentiment,  
Which was not known three hundred years ago?  
It is an empty boast, a vain conceit  
Of folly, ignorance, and base intent."

Light and darkness—Boast of D'Aubigné—Two sets of barbarians—Catholic and Protestant art—The "painter of the Reformation"—Two witnesses against D'Aubigné—Schlegel—Hallam—"Bellowing in bad Latin"—Testimony of Erasmus—Destruction of monasteries—Literary drought—Luther's plaint—Awful desolation—An "iron padlock"—Early Protestant schools—D'Aubigné's omissions—*Burning* zeal—Light and flame—Zeal for ignorance—Burning of libraries—Rothman and Omar—Disputatious theology—Its practical results—Morbid taste—The Stagirite—Mutual distrust—Case of Galileo—Liberty of the press—Old and new style—Religious wars—Anecdote of Reuchlin—Italy pre-eminent—Plaint of Leibnitz—Revival of letters—A shallow sophism—A parallel—Great inventions—Literary ages—Protestant testimony—Döllinger's testimony of the reformers themselves.

It is one of the proudest boasts of the Reformation that it gave a powerful impulse to literature and the arts. Before it, the world was sunk in utter darkness, both religious and literary; after it, all was light and refinement. Before it, society remained stationary; after it, every thing was in a state of progression and improvement. But for the Reformation, we would still have been immersed in worse than Egyptian darkness; we would have had neither science nor literature!

Such is the proudly boasting theory which has been broached and maintained by many superficial admirers of the Reformation. D'Aubigné gravely asserts "that the Reformation not only communicated a mighty impulse to literature, but served to elevate the arts, although Protestantism has often been reproached as their enemy."\* He laments that "many Protestants have willingly taken up and borne this

---

\* Aubigné, vol. iii, p. 190.



reproach.”\* After devoting three pages to a tissue of gratuitous assertions and of special pleading to prove the “reproach unmerited,” he winds up in this triumphant strain: “Thus every thing progressed—arts, literature, purity of worship, and the minds of prince and people.”† If the Reformation caused “the arts and literature” to progress no faster nor better than it did “the purity of worship, and the minds of prince and people,” we greatly fear, from the many stubborn facts already adduced to elucidate the character of this latter progression, that the former was not rapid, nor even real.

The Reformation favorable to the fine arts! As well might you assert that a conflagration is beneficial to a city which it consumes, or that the incursions of the northern barbarians, in the fifth and sixth centuries, were favorable to architecture, painting, sculpture, and the other fine arts. Wherever the Reformation appeared, it pillaged, defaced and often burnt churches and monasteries; it broke up and destroyed statues and paintings; and it often burnt whole libraries. Its ruthless vandalism spared none of the glories of the old Catholic art. Whatever was connected with the Catholic worship, or could serve as a memorial of old Catholic piety, was wantonly destroyed.

The armies of Goths and Vandals, who overran Italy and sacked Rome fourteen centuries ago, did not manifest a more ruthless and destructive spirit than did the Lutheran army of the Constable Bourbon, in their wanton pillage of Rome in 1527, after the battle of Pavia.

“Rome had been taken and pillaged by the Constable Bourbon: his army, which was composed in good part of Lutherans, had filled the holy city with abominations. The soldiers of this prince had changed the basilica of St. Peter into a stable, and given papal bulls as litter to their horses. . . . They burned even the grass, and sold the ears of their prisoners for their weight in gold. The eternal city would have been destroyed, had not God cast on

---

\* D'Aubigné, vol. iii, p. 190.

† Ibid., p. 192.

it an eye of pity. He made use of the pestilence, which this horde of barbarians had spread on its journey, to banish them from Italy."\*

• Wolfgang Menzel furnishes the following summary account of the sack of the city:†

"The Lancers ashamed of their conduct, demanded to be led against the Pope, and astonished Rome suddenly beheld the enemy before her gates. Charles de Bourbon was killed by a shot from the city. The soldiery, enraged at this catastrophe, carried it by storm, A. D. 1527. The pillage lasted fourteen days. The commands of the officers were disregarded, and Frundsberg fell ill from vexation. The Lutheran troopers converted the papal chapels into stables, dressed themselves in the cardinals' robes, and proclaimed Luther Pope. Clement was besieged in the Torre di San Angelo and taken prisoner. The numbers of unburied bodies, however, produced a pestilence, which carried off the greater part of the invaders."

Even the splendid creations of the genius of a Raphael, and of an Angelo, were not sacred in the eyes of this new northern horde. True, all this destruction took place in time of war; but its horrors had been increased tenfold by the religious fanaticism to which the Reformation had given rise. We shall have occasion to prove, in the sequel, that similar enormities were perpetrated in time of peace, and under the sole pretext of religious zeal.

Thus the Reformation destroyed many of the noblest works of art: what did it build up in their place? Did it produce architects like Fontana, Julio Romano, Bramante, Michael Angelo, and Bernini? Did it rear edifices to compare with those splendid Gothic piles scattered over Europe by the genius of Catholic architecture in the Middle Ages? Or in any thing that could vie with St. Peter's church at Rome? Did it substitute higher or nobler melody for the sublime Catholic music which it had proscribed? Did it give birth to painters and sculptors who could rival Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, the two Caracci, Domenichino, Paul Veronese, Raphael, or Angelo?

---

\* Audin, *Life of Luther*, p. 289, who quotes Guicciardini—*Sacco di Roma*, Cochlæus, *De Marillac*, and Maimbourg, l, i.

† *History of Germany* vol. ii, p. 247.

D'Aubigné indeed, boasts of the pictorial skill of Lucas Kranach, Holbein, and Albert Durer.\* We do not question the genius of the two last named: but it must be remembered that they learned their art and caught its inspiration in Catholic times. Their pencils were only occasionally employed on Protestant subjects. They were great artists before the Reformation began, and they continued to be pre-eminent in their profession in spite, rather than in consequence, of its influence. As for Lucas Kranach, whom our author triumphantly styles "the painter of the Reformation" he excelled chiefly in caricatures, in painting *Pope-asses* and *monk-calves*, Popes surrounded by troops of demons, and priests and monks in all possible ridiculous garbs and attitudes. We are willing to concede to him the title which his eulogist has awarded, and which we consider not inappropriate. The Reformation is heartily welcome to all the credit it may have derived from his eminence in art.

To show what was the influence of the Reformation on literature in general, we will adduce the testimony of two distinguished writers of the present century, against whose authority the flippant assertions of D'Aubigné will not weigh a feather with any enlightened or impartial man. Frederick Von Schlegel and Henry Hallam have both investigated this subject thoroughly, and have given to the world the result of their inquiry. The former may be ranked among the giants of modern literature; he has given a powerful impulse to learning and to Christian philosophy in Germany, and throughout the world. A German himself, and proud of his national literature, he has examined the subject of which we are treating in all its bearings. Though his great mind had escaped from the vagaries and endless variations of Protestantism in which he was raised, and sought repose in the bosom of Catholic unity, yet it was as free from undue prejudice as it was indefatigable in its inquiry after truth. We have already

---

\* D'Aubigné, vol. iii, p. 192.

seen how greatly he admired the genius of Luther, in whose mind, however, he detected a tincture of insanity. In his writings, he speaks of the Reformation, always with calmness and dignified impartiality, sometimes even with praise of the good of which it may have been incidentally the occasion.

Hallam was a Protestant, who, though generally impartial and accurate in his statements, was still sometimes betrayed into error by his ill concealed hostility to the Catholic Church. He has lately published a History of Literature during the sixteenth century, and the two centuries preceding and following. The plan of this work necessarily called for a thorough investigation of the very subject of our present chapter; and he has accordingly given his opinion of the literary influence of the Reformation with clearness and force. We make these remarks, to show that both the witnesses whom we are about to bring up against D'Aubigné's theory, are weighty and unexceptionable.

Schlegel very properly designates the epoch of the Reformation as the barbaro-polemic.

"A third epoch now arose, which, from the general spirit of the age, and the tone of the writings which exerted a commanding influence over the times, cannot be otherwise designated than as the era of barbaro-polemic eloquence. This rude polemic spirit—which had its origin in the Reformation, and in that concussion of faith, and, consequently, of all thought and of all science, which Protestantism occasioned—continued, down to the end of the seventeenth century, to prevail in the controversial writings and philosophic speculations both of Germany and England. This spirit was not incompatible with a sort of deep mystical sensibility, and a certain original boldness of thought and expression, such, for instance, as Luther's writings display; yet we cannot at all regard in a favorable light the general spirit of that intellectual epoch, or consider it as one by any means adapted to the intellectual exigencies of that age."\*

He concludes his lecture on this epoch in the following words of just indignation:

"When we hear the Middle Age called barbarous, we should remember that that epithet applies with far greater force to the truly barbarous era of

---

\* "Philosophy of History," vol. ii, p. 210, 211, edit. ut supra.

the Reformation, and of the religious wars which that event produced, and which continued down to the period when a sort of moral and political pacification was re-established, apparently at least, in society and the human mind.”\*

Hallam gives his opinion in still more explicit language. He says:

“Nor, again, is there any foundation for imagining that Luther was concerned for the interests of literature. None had he himself, save theological; nor are there, as I apprehend, many allusions to profane studies, or any proof of his regard to them, in all his works. On the contrary, it is probable that both the principles of this great founder of the Reformation, and the natural tendency of so intense an application to theological controversy, checked for a time the progress of philological and philosophical literature on this side the Alps.”†

A little further on, he thus treats of the general literary influence of the Reformation:

“The first effects of the great religious schism in Germany were not favorable to classical literature. An all-absorbing subject left neither relish nor leisure for human studies. Those who had made the greatest advances in learning were themselves generally involved in theological controversy, and, in some countries, had to encounter either personal suffering on account of their opinions, or at least the jealousy of a church (Protestant?) that hated the advance of knowledge. The knowledge of Greek and Hebrew was always liable to the suspicion of heterodoxy. In Italy, where classical literature was the chief object, this dread of learning could not subsist. But few learned much of Greek in these parts of Europe without some reference to theology, especially to the grammatical interpretation of the Scriptures. In those parts which embraced the Reformation, a still more threatening danger arose from the intemperate fanaticism of its adherents. Men who interpreted the Scripture by the Spirit could not think human learning of much value in religion; and they were as little likely to perceive any other advantage it could possess. There seemed, indeed, a considerable peril that, through the authority of Karlstadt, or even of Luther, the lessons of Crocus and Mossellanus would be totally forgotten. And this would very probably have been the case if one man, Melancthon, had not perceived

---

\* “Philosophy of History,” vol. ii, p. 216.

† “Introduction to the Literature of Europe, in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries,” in 2 vols., 8vo, vol. i, p. 165, edit. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1841.

the necessity of preserving human learning as a bulwark to theology itself, against the wild waves of enthusiasm."\*

In another place, he asserts that "the most striking effect of the first preaching of the Reformation was that it appealed to the ignorant."† He gives the following opinion in regard to the character of Luther's writings:

"But from the Latin works of Luther few readers, I believe, will rise without disappointment. Their intemperance, their coarseness, their inelegance, their scurrility, their wild paradoxes, that menace the foundations of religious morality, are not compensated, so far at least as my slight acquaintance with them extends, by much strength or acuteness, and still less by any impressive eloquence. Some of his treatises, and we may instance his reply to Henry VIII., or the book against 'the falsely named order of bishops,' can be described as little else than *bellowing in bad Latin*. Neither of these books displays, so far as I can judge, any striking ability."

"It is not to be imagined," he continues, "that a man of his vivid parts fails to perceive an advantage in that close grappling, sentence by sentence, with an adversary, which fills most of his controversial writings: and in scornful irony he had no superior. His epistle to Erasmus, prefixed to his treatise *De Servo Arbitrio*, is bitterly insolent in terms as civil as *he* could use. But the clear and comprehensive line of argument which enlightens the reader's understanding and resolves his difficulties, is always wanting. An unbounded dogmatism, resting on the infallibility, practically speaking, of his own judgment, pervades his writings; no indulgence is shown, no pause allowed to the hesitating; whatever stands in the way of his decisions—the fathers of the Church, the schoolmen and philosophers, the canons and councils—is swept away in a current of impetuous declamation: and, as every thing contained in Scripture, according to Luther, is easy to be understood, and can only be understood in his sense, every deviation from his doctrine incurs the anathema of perdition. Jerome, he says, far from being rightly canonized, must, but for some special grace, have been damned for his interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. That the Zuinglians, as well as the whole Church of Rome, and the Anabaptists, were shut out by their tenets from salvation, is more than insinuated in numerous passages of Luther's writings. Yet he had passed himself through several changes of opinion. In 1518, he rejected auricular confession; in 1520, it was both useful and necessary; not long afterwards, it was again laid aside. I have

---

\* "Introduction to the Literature of Europe," etc., vol. i, p. 181, § 19.

† Ibid., p. 192, § 12.

found it impossible to understand or to reconcile his tenets concerning faith and works, etc."\*

We might rest the whole case on the authority of the two learned witnesses just named: but we will proceed to show that their opinion is correct, because clearly founded on the facts of history, and on the testimony of writers contemporary with the Reformation itself. Erasmus was the most distinguished literary character of Germany in the sixteenth century. He was an eye-witness of the earlier scenes in the great drama of the Reformation. He will scarcely be suspected, when it is known that he was the intimate friend and correspondent of Melancthon and of other leading reformers, towards whose party he was charged with leaning. He was certainly a competent judge of the literary influence of the change in religion, and he was not disposed to undervalue that influence, even after his rupture with Luther.

The Reformation had been *enlightening* the world for about ten years, when Erasmus wrote: "Wherever Lutheranism reigns, there literature utterly perishes."† In the same year, 1528, he employed the following language in one of his letters: "I dislike these gospellers on many accounts, but chiefly because, through their agency, literature everywhere languishes, disappears, lies drooping, and perishes: and yet, without learning, what is a man's life? They love good cheer and a wife; for other things they care not a straw."‡ In a letter to Melancthon, he states that "at Strasburg the Protestant party had publicly taught, in 1524, that it was not right to cultivate any science, and that no language should be studied except the Hebrew."§

---

\* Introduction to the Literature of Europe," etc., vol. i, pp. 197, 198, § 26.

† "Ubi regnat Lutheranismus, ibi literarum est interitus." Epist. mvi, anno 1528. Apud Hallam ut sup., vol. i, p. 165.

‡ "Evangelicos istos, cum multis aliis, tum hoc nomine præcipuè odi, quòd per eos ubique languent, fugiunt, jacent, intereunt bonæ literæ, sine quibus quid est hominum vita? Amant viaticum et uxorem; cætera pili non faciunt."—Epis. dccccxvi, eod. anno. Apud Hallam, vol. i, p. 165.

§ Epist. 714 ad Melancthonem.

These grave charges of Erasmus were never answered, because they were, it would seem, too clearly founded in truth to admit of a reply. Had not Luther himself, the founder of the Reformation, in his appeal to the German nobility, as early as 1520, openly taught that the works of Plato, Cicero, Aristotle, and of all the ancients, should be burnt, and that the time which was not devoted to the study of the Scriptures should be employed in manual labor?\* And we shall soon see that many of Luther's disciples took him at his word, and that the early history of the Reformation more than justifies the accusations of Erasmus.

One of the first effects of the Reformation in Germany was the secularization and destruction of the monasteries, and the expulsion of the bishops from their sees. This measure of violence was of itself most disastrous to literature. In Catholic times there were flourishing schools established in all the principal monasteries, as well as near all the cathedral and many of the parochial churches. Literature had been ever cultivated under the shadow of the Catholic churches. Popes and councils, almost without number, had, during the Middle Ages, enforced the obligation of establishing such schools throughout Christendom.† In those Catholic institutions, reared in Catholic times, and by the express injunction of the Catholic Church, all the distinguished men of Germany in the sixteenth century had been educated: Reuchlin, Erasmus, Luther, Melancthon, Ecolampadius, Bucer, Eck, Emser, Zuingli, and others. The Reformation was thus indebted to these very Catholic schools for all its leading champions.

When the monasteries were destroyed, and the cathedral churches desecrated and dismantled, all those flourishing literary institutions were abolished: and the funds for their support, accumulated by the liberality of previous ages, were devoured by the avarice of the reform party. Hundreds of

---

\* Epist. ad nobiles Germanicæ, anno 1520. See Robelot, p. 358.

† For more facts on this subject, we take the liberty to refer our readers to the essay on schools and universities in the Dark Ages, in our *Miscellanea*.



flourishing colleges and academies of learning were thus destroyed at one stroke. No wonder "literature drooped and perished wherever Lutheranism reigned!" The fountains of Catholic learning, ever open and flowing by the side of the Catholic Church and monastery, having been thus suddenly dried up, all Germany was made desolate with a literary drought and sterility. Did the Reformation, during the first fifty years of its history, give birth to even one great literary character, if we except those who had been reared under Catholic auspices? If it did, we have yet to learn his name and his claims on the gratitude of mankind.\*

Luther himself was appalled at the extent of the desolation which his own recklessness had caused. In his own characteristic style, he poured forth a plaintive jeremiad, mingled with bitter invective and reproach against the leaders of the Protestant party. He lashed without mercy the avarice of the princes, who, after having devoured the substance of the Church and the funds of the Catholic schools, closed their purses, and refused to contribute to the erection of establishments to replace those they had thus wantonly annihilated.

"Others," he says, "close their hands, and refuse to provide for their pastor and preacher, and even to support them. If Germany will act thus, I am ashamed to be one of her children, and to speak her language: and if I were permitted to impose silence on my conscience (!), I would call in the Pope, and assist him and his minions to forge new chains for us, to subject us to new tortures, and to injure us more than before."

"Formerly," he continues, "when we were the slaves of Satan, when we profaned the blood of Christ, all purses were open. Money could be procured for endowing churches, for raising seminaries, for maintaining superstitions. Then nothing was spared to put children in the cloister, to send them to school; but now, when we must raise pious academies, and endow the church of Jesus Christ—endow, did I say, no, but assist in preserving her, for it is the Lord who has founded this church, and who watches over

---

\* The first that we know of, are Scaliger, Casaubon, and Grotius, who flourished a hundred years after the beginning of the Reformation, the two last of whom were almost Catholics, as we have already shown. Of Tycho Brahe and Kepler, we will speak a little further on.

her—now that we know the divine word, and that we have learned to honor the word of our Martyr-God, the purses are closed with iron padlocks! No one wishes to give any thing! The children are neglected, and no one teaches them to serve God, to venerate the blood of Jesus, while they are joyfully immolated to Mammon. The blood of Jesus is trampled under foot! And these are Christians! No schools! no cloisters! ‘The grass is withered, and the flower is fallen.’ Nowadays, when these carnal men are secure from the apprehensions of seeing their sons abandon them, and their daughters enter the convent, deprived of their patrimonies, there is no one who cultivates the understanding of children!—‘What would they learn,’ say they, ‘when they are to be neither priests nor monks?’”\*

He made a strong appeal to the Protestant princes of Germany, to induce them to found schools and academies. He told them that it was “their duty to *oblige* the cities and villages to raise schools, found masterships, and support pastors, as they are bound to make bridges and roads, and to raise public edifices. I would wish, if possible,” he adds, “to leave these men without preacher and pastor, and let them live like swine. There is no longer any fear or love of God among them. After throwing off the yoke of the Pope, every one wishes to live as he pleases. But it is the duty of all, especially of the prince, to bring up youth in the fear and love of the Lord, and to provide them with teachers and pastors. If the old people care not for these things, let them go to the d—l. But it would be a shame for the government to let the youth wallow in the mire of ignorance and vice.”†

This attempt to compel the people to support, by heavy taxation, institutions which had been hitherto reared and maintained by Catholic charity, seems to have proved little acceptable either to princes or people. Luther’s voice, which had been omnipotent when it preached up destruction and spoliation, now fell powerless, when it was at length tardily raised to enforce the necessity of liberal contribution for the rearing of institutions to replace those which had been wantonly destroyed. When his eloquence filled men’s pockets, it was effectual for persuasion; when it was employed to empty them, it was a different matter altogether: the purses of his hearers were closed with “the iron padlock” which he himself had constructed!

---

\* See Ad. Menzel, (a Protestant,) *ut supra*, tom. i, p. 231. Apud Audin.

† Luther, *Werke*, edit. Altenberg, tom. iii, 519. Reinhardt—*Sämmtliche Reformations predigten*, tom. iii, p. 445.—*Ibid.*

Few and feeble were the efforts made by early Protestantism to rear schools and colleges. Erasmus bears evidence to their utter failure even when they were made. He says:

"These gospelers also hate me, because I said that their gospel cooled down the love of literature. In reply they point to Nürenberg, where the professors of polite literature are liberally rewarded. Be it so: but if you ask the inhabitants, they will tell you that these professors have few scholars, and that the masters are as indisposed to teach, as the students to learn; *so that the scholars, no less than the professors, will have to be paid for their attendance.* I know not what will result from all these city and village schools; hitherto I have not met with any one who profited by them."\*

It is curious to observe how D'Aubigné passes over altogether, or how very delicately he alludes to these stubborn facts in reference to the literary tendency of the Reformation. They did not suit his taste, and did not therefore come within the scope of his partisan history! He speaks with great praise of the effort made by Luther to have schools established throughout Germany by law; but he carefully refrains from telling his readers of the literary desolation which Luther so strongly deplored, though himself had brought it about! He omits entirely, or strives to palliate the destructive spirit of early Protestantism, which, with more than vandalic fury, swept away from the face of the earth schools and academies, and burnt monasteries and libraries, both public and private. A volume might be filled with instances of this violence: we will select a few by way of supplying somewhat the manifold omissions of our very romantic historian.

When on his way to the diet of Worms, in 1521, Luther passed through the town of Erfurth, in the Augustinian convent of which place he had passed many years of his early life. The people received him with open arms. He made a most inflammatory harangue in the parish church, where he was wont to preach of old; and so great was the effect of his eloquence, that "a few weeks after his departure, the populace

---

\* "In Pseudo-Evangelicos."—Epist. xlvii, lib. xxxi, edit. London, Fleisher.—Ibid.

made a furious attack on the residence of the canons, and destroyed every thing they met with—*books, images, paintings*, furniture, beds, the feathers of which fell, like a thick snow, on the streets, and obscured for a moment the brightness of the day.”\*

This was but one out of a hundred examples of similar outrage, enacted not only under the eyes of Luther, but often with his connivance and consent. The work of destruction went on, until there was scarcely left in all Protestant Germany one of the many splendid monuments reared by the old Catholic literature and art.

“Those illuminated manuscripts—those ancient crucifixes, carved in wood and ivory—those episcopal rings, the gifts of Popes and emperors—those rich vestments, painted glass, gold and silver ciboria—in a word, all the relics of the middle ages, which are exhibited in the rich museums of Germany, were in great part the property of the convents. To get possession of them, the monks were secularized. After three centuries, nothing better calculated to give us an idea of German art at that period has been thought of, than to exhibit the remains of those whom the reformers robbed when living, and calumniated when dead!”†

And yet these are but a scanty remnant of those vast literary and artistic treasures which the Reformation utterly destroyed!

In Switzerland, as elsewhere, violence was the order of the day. The Reformation triumphed amidst the ruins with which it everywhere strewed the earth!

“Zuingli ascended the pulpit, and declaimed against images, which, he said, were condemned by the law of Moses and the gospel, as this latter did not revoke the command of the Hebrew legislator. Not only were paintings and statues mutilated and destroyed wherever the Reformation gained partisans, but the flames were fed by the manuscripts in which generations of monks had, in the solitude of their cloisters, endeavored to represent, in colors that time could not efface, the principal scenes of human redemption. Even in private houses the hammer’s stroke fell on those painted windows which modern art endeavors unsuccessfully to revive.”‡

---

\* Lutheri Opp., tom. i, fol. 704, edit. Altenb. Apud Audin, p. 158.

† Audin, p. 365.

‡ Idem, *ibid.*, p. 204. See also Erasmus, lib. xix, epist. iv.

D'Aubigné furnishes us with a curious instance of this destructive fanaticism at Zurich. The hero of the story is Thomas Plater, whom he eulogizes to the skies, though he feebly disapproves of his conduct in the incident in which he was the actor.

"The light of the gospel quickly found its way to his heart(!). One morning, when it was very cold, and fuel was wanted to heat the school-room stove, which it was his office to tend, he said to himself: 'Why need I be at a loss for wood when there are so many idols in the church?' The church was then empty, though Zuingli was expected to preach(!), and the bells were already ringing to summon the congregation. Plater entered with a noiseless step, grappled an image of St. John, which stood over one of the altars, carried it off, and thrust it into the stove, saying, as he did so, 'Down with thee, for in thou must go.' Certainly neither Myconius nor Zuingli would have applauded such an act."\*

What! when "the light of the gospel had found its way to his heart!" Who could blame him for following this light, and even for kindling it into a flame? Our author also informs us of the fanatical hatred of learning entertained by Karlstadt and the prophets, who headed the revolt of the peasants.

"But soon after this, Karlstadt went to still greater lengths; he began to pour contempt upon human learning; and the students heard their aged tutor advising them, from his rostrum, to return to their homes, and resume the spade, or follow the plow, and cultivate the earth, because man was to eat bread in the sweat of his brow! George Mohr, master of the boys' school at Wittenberg, carried away by a similar madness, called from his window to the burghers outside to come and remove their children. Where indeed was the use of their continuing their studies, since Storck and Stübner had never been at the university, and yet were prophets? A mechanic was just as well, nay, perhaps better qualified than all the divines in the world, to preach the gospel!"†

Who can calculate the mischief these doctrines did to literature? Who can estimate the literary treasures which were annihilated in the bloody war of the peasants, led on by men who openly avowed their hostility to all human

---

\* D'Aubigné, vol. iii, p. 253.

† Ibid., p. 61.

learning? In the ravages of Germany, perpetrated by the hostile armies, before the revolt was finally stifled in their own blood, scenes of destruction were enacted, which would have put to the blush the Gothic armies of old!

Another class of religionists, the Anabaptists, to whose fanaticism the principles of the Reformation had manifestly led, were no less inimical to learning. Having seized on the city of Munster, from which they had expelled the prince bishop, they issued an order to devastate the churches, which was accordingly done. They then went further. In the mad intoxication of triumph, "a manifesto, published by Rothmann, decided that as there was only one book necessary to salvation—the Bible—all others should be burned, as useless or dangerous. Two hours afterwards, the library of Rudolph Langius, consisting almost entirely of Greek and Latin manuscripts, perished in the flames."\* The Caliph Omar, for a similar reason, had ordered the great library of Alexandria to be burned, A.D. 632.—A fine example truly, and faithfully followed!

But it was not merely by acts of violence that the Reformation injured the cause of literature; it brought into action many other influences highly prejudicial to the progress of learning. We shall briefly advert to some of the principal of these, and will begin with that already referred to by Hallam.

The Reformation fevered the minds of men with religious controversy. It drew off the votaries of literature from the academic groves and the Pierian springs, into the arid and thorny paths of disputations theology. Though many of the theological disputants, who appeared on the arena at the period of the Reformation, obtained temporary credit for themselves and their cause by their writings, yet it is certain that the literary world, at least, would have been more benefited, had they devoted their mental energies to the prosecution

---

\* See *Histoire des Anabaptistes*, par Catrou, Liv. ii; and Audin, p. 460.

of scientific studies. There is no doubt, that from this cause, the ranks of the literati, both among Catholics and Protestants, were much thinned; and that in consequence the ardor for literary pursuits was greatly abated. Had the world continued in religious unity, and had no acrimonious controversies arisen, such men as Luther, Bucer, Melancthon, Eck, Emser, and Bellarmine, might have been able to contribute their full share to the progress of letters.

To show how this cause practically operated to the detriment of literature, we will furnish a few facts, selected almost at random from many of the same kind. We have seen how the fanaticism of the Anabaptists destroyed manuscripts and burnt an extensive library in the city of Munster. It is curious to trace the beginning of this fanaticism, and to mark its influence on literature in that city. Before the appearance of Luther, Munster enjoyed peace and tranquillity, and cultivated learning with great success. Shortly after the commencement of the Reformation, the scene changed altogether. Says Audin:

"It suddenly became a city of trouble and disorder—was restless and uneasy under its obscurity, and aspired to be the rival of Wittenberg. It was a rich and commercial city, and had cultivated literature with success. Its university had merited the attention of the literary world. It loved antiquity, especially Greece, whose poets it published and elucidated. This was the passion until the disciples of Luther entered its gates, when this demi-classic city—half Greek and half Latin, by its morals and instincts—involved itself in theological disputes, and abandoned the study of Cicero and Homer, to become interpreter of the sacred volume. It is needless to say, that it found in these inspired writings many things that our fathers never dreamed of. Then all the classic divinities abandoned Munster, as the swallows fly away in winter, only that they did not intend to return. In their place, an acrimonious and punctilious theology destroyed the peace of scholars, masters, and people. The revolutionary progress of sectarians is always the same."\*

Whoever will read attentively the history of the Reformation, will be struck with the truth of this last remark. In

---

\* Audin, "Life of Luther," p. 458.

almost every city in Germany where the reformers made their appearance, they produced, to a greater or less extent, the same disastrous revolution in literary taste, which they effected in Munster. Even Charles Villers, one of the most unscrupulous advocates of the Reformation, admits that "the attention of the literary world was turned away, for more than a century (after the Reformation) unto miserable disputes about dogmas, and confessions of faith."\* Controversy was not only carried on between the champions of Catholicity and of Protestantism, but it raged violently in the bosom of the reform party itself. Men, who might have been of immense service to the republic of letters, thus wasted their energies in sectarian contentions. For more than six years a violent dispute was carried on between the Lutherans and Calvinists on the subject of the Eucharist, and at the close of it, they were more widely separated than ever. Leibnitz tells us, that a single controversy between two Protestant divines of Leipsic, *on the peremptory period of repentance*, gave rise to more than fifty treatises in Latin and German.†

The eagerness for religious controversy among the earlier Protestants of Germany, forcibly reminds us of the picture which St. Gregory of Nyssa draws of a similar rage of disputation on the subject of the Trinity, among the sectarians of Constantinople under the Emperor Theodosius the Great. "If you wish to change a piece of money," says he, "you are first entertained with a long discourse on the difference of the Son who is born, and of the Son who is not born. If you ask the price of bread, you are answered, 'that the Father is greater, and that the Son is less;' and if you ask, when will the bath be warm? you are seriously assured, 'that the Son was created.' "‡

It is a singular fact, that notwithstanding the invectives of Luther against the philosophy of Aristotle, it was still retained

---

\* Essai sur l'Influence, etc., ut sup., p. 276.

† Commercii Epist. Leibnitziana, Selecta Specimina—Hanoveræ. 1805, Epist. xcv.

‡ Apud Robelot, p. 390, sup. cit.



in most of the Protestant universities of Germany, and even made the standard of disputation. Melancthon published commentaries on the writings of the Stagirite, and the authority of the latter was greatly respected by the German Protestant universities, as late as the close of the eighteenth century. Ramus was refused a professorship at Geneva, because he would not adopt the philosophy of Aristotle, which was still taught in this cradle of Calvinism.\* While Protestant Germany was thus sternly upholding the system of philosophy which Luther had decried and endeavored to banish from Christendom, the new school of the Platonic philosophy was established in Italy, under the auspices of the Medici. All the invectives of the reformers against the subtle disputations of the schoolmen, who had adopted the Aristotelian philosophy, thus recoiled on the heads of their own party.

The mutual distrust and suspicion, which the Reformation sowed in the minds of men, constituted another serious obstacle to the progress of letters. Competition and emulation often elicit talent and promote improvement; but when this feeling degenerates into a suspicious jealousy and mutual hatred, it greatly retards advancement in learning. Whatever new systems of literature or of philosophy were broached by one religious party, were often rejected, through a mere spirit of opposition, by the other. When mankind were united in religious faith, they worked in unison for the promotion of learning: when they were split up into religious parties, they often mutually thwarted and hindered one another. The endless variations and vagaries of Protestantism, on the one hand, led to a skepticism, which sneered at every system which savored of antiquity, no matter how well grounded; and the cautious dread of innovation by the Catholic Church, on the other, caused her sometimes to view with suspicion, at least for a time, new systems of philosophy which were sustained by respectable, if not conclusive arguments.

---

\* Beza, Epist. xxxvi, p. 202. Apud Robelot, p. 362.

An example of the former feeling—of skepticism—is given by the French philosopher Maupertuis, who tells us that it required a half century to satisfy the learned as to the truth of the principle of attraction, which was at first viewed as reviving a feature of the odious occult sciences, so extensively cultivated in previous centuries.\* A remarkable instance of the dread of innovation on the part of the Catholic Church, is presented by the well known case of Galileo. The wanton abuse of the Scriptures, for the support of a thousand conflicting opinions, by the disciples of the Reformation, had rendered every species of innovation, which was attempted to be proved by their authority, an object of apprehension on the part of Rome. It may be confidently asserted, that, but for the distrust sowed by the Reformation, and for the attempt made by Galileo to prove his system, not merely as a specious theory but as incontestably true, by the authority of the written word, he would never have been molested.

Some time before the days of Galileo, Cardinal Nicholas de Cusa had openly defended the system of Philolaus and Pythagoras, on the motion of the earth; and no one then thought of opposing the theory on religious grounds. Nearly a century before Galileo, Nicholas Copernicus, a Catholic priest, had openly advocated the same theory: and he was not only not opposed, but Pope Paul III.† approved of the dedication to himself of his great work on the revolutions of the heavenly bodies.‡ How are we then to explain that a system, which was thus openly maintained for nearly a century by cardinals and prelates at Rome itself, where Copernicus had been professor of astronomy—and all this, without

---

\* Apud Robelot, p. 355.

† A copy of the original work of Copernicus is preserved in the British Museum. It was printed at Nürenberg by John Petreius, at the expense of Nicholas Schomberg, the cardinal of Capua. In the beginning of the volume is printed a laudatory letter of the cardinal to Copernicus, dated Rome, 1st of November, 1536.

‡ "De Orbium Cœlestium Revolutionibus." Folio—1543, p. 196.

any opposition from the Roman court—was afterwards viewed with some suspicion, when too warmly advocated on scriptural grounds by Galileo?

The reason is manifest: the wanton abuse of the Scriptures by the partisans of the Reformation had made Rome suspicious of every thing which savored of novelty. Ambitious rivals, whom the literary fame of Galileo had eclipsed, had also represented his system in an odious and false light to the Roman court: they had painted it as opposed to the Scriptures, to the testimony of which Galileo himself on the other hand as confidently appealed. The whole issue was thus made on scriptural grounds. Rome took the alarm, and, without condemning the system of Galileo as false, enjoined silence on the disputants. Galileo remained in Rome from February to July, 1633, a space of more than five months, during which time he resided at the spacious palace of his special friend, the Tuscan ambassador, who was his surety during the trial. For only four days at most, even according to the testimony of Mr. Drinkwater, his Protestant historian, was he in nominal confinement; being “honorably lodged in the apartments of the fiscal of the Inquisition.”\*

The reckless abuse of the Scriptures by the Reformation, and the distrust thereby occasioned, are thus alone responsible for this temporary check to scientific improvement in the person of Galileo. But, on the other hand, as an offset to the case of the Italian philosopher, did not the Protestant astronomer, Tycho Brahe, invent, on scriptural grounds, a system, at variance with the Copernican, and now universally rejected, though then popular among Protestants? And was not his great disciple Kepler, as well as himself, persecuted by Protestants, for his valuable discoveries in astronomy?†

---

\* Drinkwater—Life of Galileo, p. 58, and p. 64. See on this subject an able article in the Dublin Review, lately republished in Cincinnati in pamphlet form. It exhausts the subject.

† Kepler and Tycho Brahe, the former a German, the latter a Dane, were intimate friends and associates. They were both employed as imperial

The authority of an unexceptionable witness, Henry Hallam, strongly confirms the view just taken of the case of Galileo. He says: "For eighty years, it has been said, this theory of the earth's motion had been maintained, without censure; and it could only be the greater boldness of Galileo in its assertion which drew down upon him the notice of the Church."\* In a note,† he disproves the assertion of Drinkwater—"that Galileo did not endeavor to prove his system compatible with Scripture;" and adds: "it seems, in fact, to have been this *over desire* to prove his theory orthodox, which incensed the Church against it. See an extraordinary article on this subject in the eighth number of the Dublin Review."‡ Guicciardini, an ardent disciple of Galileo, in a letter dated March 4th, 1616, says, "that he had demanded of the Pope and the Holy Office to declare the system of Copernicus founded on the Bible." At Rome, Galileo was treated most kindly by the Pope and the cardinals, as he himself testifies in a letter to his disciple Receneri, written in 1633.§

The restrictions on the liberty of the press were also often injurious to the progress of learning. Protestant governments in Europe have been, and are even at this day, deserving of at least as much censure on this subject as those of Catholic countries. The supposed necessity for a censorship of the press, frequently originated in the wanton abuse of it

---

astronomers by the Emperor Rudolph II., after having been but little appreciated, if not severely treated by their Protestant brethren in their own countries. Of Kepler W. Menzel writes as follows: "His discovery was condemned by the Tübingen university (Protestant) as contrary to the Bible. He was about to destroy his work, when an asylum was granted to him at Grætz, which he afterwards quitted for the imperial court. He was, notwithstanding his Lutheran principles, tolerated by the Jesuits, *who knew how to value scientific knowledge*. He was persecuted solely in his native country, where he with difficulty saved his mother from being burnt as a witch."—History of Germany, vol. ii, p. 308, note; Bohn's edition.

\* History of Literature, etc., vol. ii, p. 248.

† Ibid., p. 249.

‡ See also the article Sciences Humaines in Nergier's Dictionary, which sheds much light on this whole transaction.

§ Published in the "Mercure de France," July 17, 1784.

by those who had adopted the principles of the Reformation. But for the mutual distrust which this revolution caused to arise in the minds of men, the press would have been free, or at least much less restricted than it really was. We, in fact, read of little or no restriction on the liberty of the press, until some time after the Reformation; though the art of printing had been in successful operation for more than half a century. Thus the Reformation is fairly chargeable, at least in a great measure, with having originated, or at least occasioned that very censorship of the press, which is so often the burden of the invectives of its partisans against the Catholic Church.

But perhaps the most singular instance of the obstacles thrown in the way of literary improvement by the Reformation, is that furnished by the obstinate resistance of the Protestant governments of Europe, to the change in the Calendar, introduced by Pope Gregory XIII., in the year 1582. The correction of the Calendar was founded on the clearest and most incontestable principles of astronomy; and yet, solely because the improvement emanated from Rome, England refused to adopt it for one hundred and seventy years—until 1752; Sweden adopted the new style, a year later, in 1753, and the German states, the very cradle of the Reformation, only in 1776! As a distinguished writer has caustically remarked, the Protestant potentates preferred “warring with the stars to agreeing with the Pope!”

The long and bloody religious wars, which the Reformation caused in Germany, were another very serious hinderance to the progress of learning. These wars continued at intervals for nearly one hundred and fifty years, until the treaty of Westphalia in 1648; and they filled all Germany with widespread desolation. The war of extermination against the peasants, the bloody war against the Anabaptists, the wars of Charles V., and the Protestant princes of Germany; and finally, the terrible thirty years’ war—from 1618 to 1648—between the Catholic party headed by the house of Austria, and the Protestant party led on chiefly by the kings of Swe-

den; made all Germany a scene of turmoil, confusion, and bloodshed. How many of the monuments of ancient literature and art were swept away during all this bloody strife! How many cities were desolated, libraries burnt, and men of eminence slain! In the midst of a bloody civil war, with danger constantly at their very door, men had neither leisure nor inclination to apply to literary pursuits. Apollo courts peace: he seldom wears laurels stained with blood.

We may safely affirm, that, for the reasons hitherto alleged, and more particularly the last, the Reformation retarded the literary progress of Germany for more than a century. Any candid man will be convinced of this, who will compare the literary history of Germany in the beginning of the sixteenth, with what it became in the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century. At the dawn of the Reformation, German literature was in a most promising condition. Greek, Latin, and Hebrew learning had revived, and they were beginning to be cultivated with success. Reuchlin, Budæus, and Erasmus had filled Germany with literary glory.

An anecdote of Reuchlin, related by D'Aubigné, may serve to give us some idea of the extent to which Greek literature was then carried in Germany. In 1498—twenty years before the Reformation—he was sent to Rome as ambassador from the electoral court of Saxony.

“An illustrious Greek, Argyropylos, was explaining in that metropolis, to a numerous auditory, the wonderful progress his nation had formerly made in literature. The learned ambassador went with his suite to the room where the master was teaching, and on his entrance saluted him, and lamented the misery of Greece, then languishing under Turkish despotism. The astonished Greek asked the German: ‘Whence came you, and do you understand Greek?’ Reuchlin replied: ‘I am a German, and am not quite ignorant of your language.’ At the request of Argyropylos, he read and explained a passage of Thucydides, which the professor happened to have before him; upon which Argyropylos cried out in grief and astonishment: ‘Alas! alas! Greece cast out and fugitive, is gone to hide herself beyond the Alps!’”\*

---

\* D'Aubigné, vol. i, p. 96.

Had Argyropylos visited Germany a century later, he would have found that "fugitive Greece which had hid herself beyond the Alps," had been ruthlessly driven from her cherished shelter in Germany, by the myrmidons of the Reformation!

At the commencement of the Reformation, many German princes were liberal patrons of learning. Among these, the most conspicuous, were the Emperor Maximilian; Frederick, elector of Saxony, who founded the university of Wittenberg in 1502; Joachim, elector of Brandenburg, who established the university of Frankfort on the Oder, in 1506; Albert, archbishop of Mentz; and George, duke of Saxony.\* But the troubles occasioned by the doctrines of the reformers caused the German princes to turn their attention more to camps and battle fields, than to the seats of learning and the patronage of learned men.

Italy had led the way in literary improvement. Hallam says: "The difference in point of learning between Italy and England was at least that of a century: that is, the former was more advanced in knowledge of ancient literature in 1400 than the latter was in 1500."† In another place, speaking of the relative encouragement of literature by Italy and Germany, he has this remarkable passage: "Italy was then (in the beginning of the sixteenth century), and perhaps *has been ever since*, the soil where literature, if it has not always most flourished, has stood highest in general estimation."‡—This avowal is the more precious as coming from a decided Protestant, and an Englishman.

Speaking of the history of literature from the year 1520 to 1550, he pays the following just tribute to the literary ascendancy of Italy:

"Italy, the genial soil where the literature of antiquity had been first cultivated, still retained her superiority in the fine perceptions of its beauties, and in the power of retracing them by spirited imitation. It was the land

---

\* See Hallam—History of Literature, etc., sup. cit., vol. i, p. 159.

† Ibid., p. 145, § 8.

‡ Ibid., p. 159, § 48.

of taste and sensibility; never surely more so, than in the age of Raphael as well as Ariosto.”\*

Literary societies for the promotion of learning were formed much later in Germany than in Italy and France. It was only in 1617, that the “Fruitful Society,” the first that ever existed in Germany, was established at Weimar.† The example of Italy would have been in all probability much sooner followed, had not the Reformation engaged the public attention in other pursuits. The spirit of Renschlin and of Erasmus had disappeared: their refined taste was superseded by that which Schlegel so happily designates the barbaro-polemic; and the result was the retarding of literary improvement in the deplorable manner which we have stated.

From the dawn of the Reformation to the reign of Frederick the Great—a period of more than two hundred years—Germany was behind the other principal countries of Europe in learning: it required full two hundred years for her to recover from the rude shock her literature had received from the hands of the reformers! In 1715, the great Leibnitz feelingly deplored this literary desolation of his country.‡ He says in another place, that the relish for philosophical pursuits was so rare in Germany, “that he could not find any person in his country, who had a taste for philosophy and mathematics, and with whom he could converse.”§ Even as late as 1808, Jacobi, another Protestant writer, draws a frightful picture of the moral and literary condition of the German Protestant universities during his time.||

Still, it is very common to find it boldly asserted from the pulpit and through the press, that the revival of letters in Europe was brought about by the Reformation! Nothing could be more unfounded in fact, and, indeed, more utterly

\* History of Literature, vol. i, p. 173, § 1. † Idem., vol. ii, p. 172.

‡ See his letter to M. Bignon, 22d June, 1715—*Commercii Epist. Leibnitz. Selecta Specimina*.—Epist. xciv.—Apud Robelot.

§ Letter to M. de Beauval—ibid. Ep. xxv.

|| See his testimony in Robelot, p. 421, 422.



absurd, than this assertion. To Italy, under the fostering protection of her Medici, her Gonzagas, her Estes, and, above all, of her Popes, and more especially of Nicholas V. and Leo X., do we in a great measure owe the revival of learning in Europe. All persons of any information admit this fact. Roscoe, an English Protestant, has written an extensive work to do honor to the pontificate of Leo X., which he proves to have been the golden age of learning.\* Hallam also pays a splendid tribute to this second Augustan age of literature.† A light then shot up in Italy—in Rome its brightness was most dazzling—which illumined the whole world. Nor was this the first time that Rome had led the way in improvement and civilization.

The literary impulse having been thus powerfully given, all Europe was rapidly advancing in learning. The progress was steady and healthy. On a sudden, the storm of the Reformation broke in upon the tranquillity of Europe, which was peacefully and calmly engaged in literary pursuits. The result was almost the same as that of a violent and long-continued storm on a beautiful garden, fragrant with flowers and rich in fruits. The fruits of previous toil were rudely shaken down ere they had become mature; the flowers were blighted; and the garden was changed into a desert!—If literature was still preserved, it was in spite of the Reformation.

The usual argument of those who maintain that the Reformation was the cause of the literary resurrection of Europe, is founded on a comparison of the condition of Europe before, with what it became, after the Reformation. Literature was in a more flourishing condition *after* than *before* the sixteenth century: *therefore*, the Reformation caused the change for the better. Never was there a more shallow sophism. It belongs to the category: *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*.‡ To

---

\* Roscoe—Life and Pontificate of Leo X., sup. cit.

† History of Literature, vol. i, p. 148, seqq. See also Audin, Life of Luther, p. 124, seqq.

‡ "After this; therefore on account of this."

estimate aright the influence of the Reformation on learning, we should compare the literary state of Europe before it, with what it *would have been* afterwards, if the Reformation had not intervened: or, more properly, we should compare the progress which Europe *really* made after the Reformation, especially in Protestant countries, with what it would have made, but for the agitations caused by this revolution. Abiding by this fair test, we fearlessly assert, on the authority of the facts and evidence above adduced, that the literary influence of the Reformation was most disastrous.\*

We do not pretend to deny that Protestantism has produced many illustrious literary characters. Catholicism has produced at least as great men, and many more of them. Galileo and La Place may compare advantageously with Huygens and Newton: while Copernicus far outshines Tycho Brahe. The latter, though a Protestant, was encouraged chiefly by Catholic potentates of Germany. Among philosophers, if Bacon and Descartes were weighed in the balance, the latter would probably preponderate. It would lead us too far, to continue this comparison through all its details. But we may ask, whether the annals of Protestant literature can produce brighter names than Cardinal Ximenes, Cervantes, Lope de Vega, Herrera, and Calderon, in Spain; Bossuet, Fenelon, Racine, Moliere, and Legendre, in France; Raphael, Michael

---

\* These remarks are made in the hypothesis, that the fact is as stated by the admirers of the Reformation; namely, that the literary condition of Europe was really and immediately improved in those countries where it gained a foothold. We may well deny this fact, particularly in regard to Germany, with which our present business principally lies. Comparing the literary state of Germany during the fifty years preceding Luther's revolt, with what it became during the fifty years following, there is no doubt that there was a remarkable falling off, both in literary taste and in literary progress. Instead of advancing, Germany clearly receded in the literary race, not merely for a half, but for more than a whole century after the Reformation. The facts alleged above clearly prove this; else they have no meaning whatsoever. So that the theory which we are discussing is erroneous in point of fact, as well as of logic.

Angelo, Vida, Tasso, Muratori, Tiraboschi, Boscovitch, and a countless host of others in Italy; Frederick von Schlegel, Möeller, Döllinger, and Görres in Germany; and Pope, Dryden, Lingard, and Moore in England and Ireland! These are but a few, selected almost at random, from the long list of Catholic literati.

In regard to the older inventions which have proved of great and permanent utility to mankind, a far greater number was made by Catholics than by Protestants. The mariner's compass, gunpowder, the art of printing, clocks and watches, as well as steamboat navigation,\* were all discovered or invented by Catholics. To them also belongs the glory of having discovered America, and of having first doubled the Cape of Good Hope and penetrated to the Indies. The microscope, the telescope, the thermometer, the barometer, were all invented by Catholics. The chief great discoveries in astronomy—that of Jupiter's satellites, of spots in the sun, and of most of the new planets or asteroids—were made by Catholics. Modern poetry was first cultivated successfully in Italy by Dante and Petrarch; and Blair himself admits, that in historical writing the Italians probably excel all other people.

The paper on which we write, the general use of window glass and the art of staining it, the weaving of cloth, the art of enameling on ivory and metals, the discovery of stone coal, the sciences of galvanism and mineralogy; and many other inventions and improvements were first introduced by Catholics: most of them, too, in the "dark" ages. And it may be maintained on the faith of genuine history, that during the three hundred years preceding the Reformation, probably more great and important inventions were made, than during the three hundred centuries succeeding that revo-

---

\* Blasco de Garay, a Spaniard, made the first successful experiment in steam navigation, in the harbor of Barcelona, in the year 1543. Eighty-five years later, Brancas followed up the discovery in Italy.—See "A Year in Spain," by an American Protestant, vol. i, p. 47, seq. *Note*—Edit. New York, 1830.

lation. Still we are to be told, that we owe all our literature and improvement to the Reformation!

We may here also remark, that the two greatest epochs of modern literature—that of Leo X. and of Louis XIV.—both occurred in Catholic countries and under Catholic auspices. The age of Frederick the Great, in Germany, was nearly allied in character with that which immediately followed it under the influence of the infidels of France: while the literary glories of Queen Anne's reign in England, were equaled, if they were not surpassed, by those of the much earlier age of Ferdinand and Isabella, in Spain.

It is a very common charge against the Catholic Church that she keeps her people in ignorance; and to prove this accusation, an appeal is made to the condition of Catholic countries, in which, it is said, the common people are not educated. Let us see what a living author, and an unexceptionable witness, because a Protestant and a Scotchman, says upon this very subject. He relates, too, what he himself saw and had full opportunities of examining. We allude to Laing, whose "Notes of a Traveler" are well known in the literary world. He writes:

"In Catholic Germany, in France, and even in Italy, the education of the common people in reading, writing, arithmetic, music, manners, and morals, is at least as generally diffused and as faithfully promoted by the clerical body as in Scotland. It is by their own advance, and not by keeping back the advance of the people, that the popish priesthood of the present day seek to keep ahead of the intellectual progress of the community in Catholic lands: and they might perhaps retort on our Presbyterian clergy, and ask if they too are in their countries at the head of the intellectual movement of the age? Education is in reality not only not repressed, but is encouraged by the Popish Church, and is a mighty instrument in its hands, and ably used. In every street in Rome, for instance, there are, at short distances, public primary schools for the education of the children of the lower and middle classes in the neighborhood. Rome, with a population of one hundred and fifty-eight thousand six hundred and seventy-eight souls, has three hundred and seventy-two primary schools,\* with

---

\* This number is perhaps somewhat below the mark. According to the

four hundred and eighty-two teachers, and fourteen thousand children attending them. Has Edinburgh so many schools for the instruction of those classes? I doubt it. Berlin, with a population about double that of Rome, has only two hundred and sixty-four schools. Rome has also her university, with an average attendance of six hundred and sixty students: and the papal states, with a population of two and a half millions, contain seven universities. Prussia, with a population of fourteen millions, has but seven."

The value of this splendid testimony is greatly enhanced, when we reflect that Scotland and Prussia are the boasted lands of common schools. Protestants, it would seem, can *boast* more on what they have done for literature; but Catholics can *do* more without making so great a parade.

We will conclude this chapter with the able analysis of Dr. Döllinger's researches into the literary influence of the Reformation, as presented by the Dublin Review, in the paper which we have already quoted. From its perusal the reader may gather what the reformers themselves and their own immediate disciples thought on this subject; and they surely must be considered unexceptionable witnesses, especially when they testify against themselves.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON THE CONDITION OF LITERATURE AND SCIENCE.

"To those who judge by the commonly received notions, this inquiry, we doubt not, will appear perfectly idle, perhaps absurd. To move a doubt upon the subject is to return to the first principles—to call evidence itself in question. The very name of the Reformation is popularly regarded as synonymous with enlightenment and progress, and from it is commonly dated the origin of what is called the great intellectual movement of the modern world. How far the character is merited, let it be determined from the statements of the reformers themselves.

"(1.) THE SCIENCES AND PROFANE LITERATURE.—Perhaps it would be wrong to insist too much upon the testimony of Erasmus; but it is impossible to read his indignant denunciations of Luther, as condemning the

---

*Cracas*, or Roman Almanac for 1834, Rome then had three hundred and eighty-one free schools; and we presume the number has not since decreased, as we know the population has been steadily increasing. Many of these schools are supported by private charity, while those of Protestant countries are maintained only by burdensome taxation.

whole philosophy of Aristotle as diabolical, declaring 'all science, whether practical or speculative, to be damnable, and all the speculative sciences to be sinful and erroneous;' his denunciation of Farel of Geneva as 'representing all human learning as an invention of the devil;' his furious tirade against the whole reforming body, as 'both publicly and privately teaching, that all human learning is but a net of the devil'—his reiterated assertions, that 'wherever Lutheranism flourishes, study begins to grow cold,' that 'where Lutheranism reigns, learning comes to ruin'—his contrasts of the Catholic and the Protestant seats of learning—without feeling that the pretensions of modern historians, as to the services rendered to learning by the Reformation, are not entirely beyond question. And, on a nearer examination, we find that these denunciations of Erasmus are literally borne out by the facts. Melancthon himself, notwithstanding his own literary tastes, is found to admit their justice. Glarean, a Swiss reformer, maintains a long argument against a party of his fellow Lutherans, who held that 'there was no need to study Greek and Latin, German and Hebrew being quite sufficient.' Gastius records the prevalence of a still more extravagant opinion among the evangelical ministers, (*complusculos evangelii ministros*), 'that it was *even unlawful* for those destined to the preaching of the gospel to study *any part of philosophy* except the sacred Scripture alone.' In the Bostock university, the celebrated Arnold Büren was suspected of infidelity, because he placed Cicero's philosophical works in the hands of his pupils, as a text-book; and in Wittenberg itself, the Rome of Lutheranism, it was publicly maintained by George Mohr, and Gabriel Didymus, that 'scientific studies were useless and destructive (*verderblich*), and that all schools and academies should be abolished.' And it is actually recorded, that in pursuance of this advice, the school-house of Wittenberg was converted into a bakery! 'It is with reluctance,' writes the celebrated Brassikanus, one of Melancthon's disciples at Tübingen, 'I am forced by truth to say, that a distastè for letters exists among men of genius, and to such a degree, even in the greatest cities of Germany, that it has become a mark of nationalism to hate learning, and an evidence of prudence and statesmanship to condemn all study.' What must have been the evidence of the evil to have extorted such an admission! Under these influences science fell completely into disrepute. Nicholas Gerbel could not find 'any period in history, where the sciences were at a lower ebb than the present.' 'In the last century, the least cultivated man,' writes Eusebius Menius, 'would have been ashamed not to be expert in mathematics and physics; but nowadays one can not but see that (to our shame in the sight of posterity) these sciences are completely despised, and that, out of a great number of students, but few would ever know what once mere boys would have been perfectly familiar with.' And so universal and deep-rooted had this hatred of science become,

that 'from the revilings of science, which echo in almost every church in Germany, and the coarse invectives against which issue from the press,' Moller, in his commentary on Malachy, 'can anticipate nothing but the complete downfall of the sciences, the re-introduction of the most immeasurable barbarism into the Church, and unlimited license for daring spirits to deal with the Christian doctrine as they may think fit.'

"(2.) THEOLOGICAL STUDIES.—The same distaste extended even to sacred studies. It will not be matter of surprise that Luther's hatred of the scholastics should have driven them at once and forever from the schools of the new learning. But it will sound oddly in the ears of a Protestant of the present day, that the *Scriptures themselves should have fallen into disrepute, even among students of divinity, and even in Luther's own university of Wittenberg*. Yet we learn from an unimpeachable witness, a professor at Wittenberg itself, that 'so great is the contempt of God's word, *that even students of divinity fly from a close study and investigation of the Bible, as if they were sated and cloyed therewith; and if they have but read a chapter or two, they imagine that they have swallowed the whole of the divine wisdom at a draught;*' and Melchior Petri, minister at Radburg, in 1569, 'is driven to confess that things have come to such a pass among Lutherans, that as Luther himself had set at naught the authorities of the entire of the fathers, so his disciples place their Father Luther far beyond, not merely the fathers, but even the Scripture itself, and rely exclusively upon him.'

"The author enters minutely into the claim of priority in the foundation of schools of biblical criticism, and the introduction of the critical study of Scripture set up in favor of the reformers. Nor does it bear the test of investigation a whit better than the claims which we have been discussing. Though we find so much stress laid by them upon the study of the Hebrew text, yet it turns out that not a single edition of the Hebrew Bible was printed in Germany during this entire period. How few copies of the editions printed at (the still popish) Venice between 1518 and 1544, and of the Paris ones of Robert Stephens, found their way into Germany, may be inferred from the exceeding rarity of these editions; and although the Basle edition of Sebastian Munster (1536) may have had somewhat more circulation, yet the first edition of the Hebrew text which appeared in Protestant Germany, dates near the close of the century after the commencement of Luther's career. In like manner, there does not appear to have been any edition of the Greek New Testament in Germany for forty years after the same period. Contrast with this disgraceful indifference, the sixteen editions of the Hebrew text printed in Venice alone before the year 1559, and the ten editions of the Greek text which appeared at Paris before 1551, and say to which side the priority in justice belongs! Well may Dr. Döllinger, with such a contrast before him, appeal to Melancthon's lamentation so



frequently and so feelingly uttered over the 'total neglect of the original sources of divine learning.'

"'Alas!' exclaims Strigel, 'were pious Christians to shed as many tears as there is water in the Saal, they could not sufficiently deplore the downfall of Christian doctrine and discipline. Men not only turn with disgust and loathing from the word of God, but what is still more deplorable, they blush at the very name of "theologian," and abandon the study of theology to a few poor wretched men, apparently without talent or means to cultivate it, and betake themselves to more honorable and more agreeable pursuits.'

"(3.) We need hardly dwell on the decay of *Patristical Studies*. The well-known principles of Luther on the subject of the authority of the fathers—his frequent declarations that the 'poor dear fathers lived better than they wrote'—his lamentations over the 'darkness on the subject of faith which pervades their writings;' their 'blindness;' the 'obscurity in which they have involved questions which are plain in the Scripture'—the contempt, and indeed worse, which he displays for them, taken individually; will prepare us for great extravagance in the same matter on the part of his followers. But we can not refrain from mentioning, as a curious example of the spirit of the time, that it was made a serious charge against a master at Augsburg, that he introduced Lactantius among his scholars as an introduction to the study of the fathers, and that 'among the especial arts which Satan employs to undermine the authority of the man of God, Dr. Luther, the chief is described to be his withdrawing them from Luther's writings to those of the fathers, and of others who are far inferior to him.'

"(4.) From the same principles of Luther will be understood without difficulty the decline of *Historical Studies* also. Germany, in the early part of the sixteenth century, had produced a larger number of historians than perhaps any other in Europe. Wimpeling, Tritheim, Albert Kranz, Rhenanus, Peutinger, Cuspinian, and several others are enumerated by Döllinger. In the last seventy years of the same century, we find scarcely a single name on the Protestant side, with the exception of Sleidan, a clever but unscrupulous writer; and the only historical writers of any note are those of the Catholic party—Gerhard van Roo, Dalrav, bishop of Olmütz, and Fabricius, rector of Düsseldorf.

"(5.) But it is from the character of the universities and other seats of learning, even more than from general statements like these, that we can most securely gather the intellectual condition of Germany. Upon this part of the subject the author appears to have bestowed exceeding care; and if it be remembered how obscure and how scattered must have been the sources of such an inquiry, some idea may be formed of the difficulty of the performance. He passes in review the universities of Erfurth, Basle, Tübingen, Wittenberg, Leipsic, Rostock, Frankfort, and Heidelberg. Contrasting their condition before and after the Reformation, and detailing in



the words of the reformers themselves, many of them members of the communities they describe, their actual condition under the working of the new system, he traces to its immediate influence the corruption which most unquestionably did follow its introduction, so clearly and satisfactorily, that it would be impossible to entertain a doubt of the fact, even if it were not expressly admitted by the parties most interested in its concealment. The universities of Germany, without any exception, were described, in the year 1568, as 'remarkable for nothing but the pride, laziness, and unbridled licentiousness of the professors,' and Camerarius (i, p. 484) often thought that 'it would be better to have no schools at all than such asylums of dishonesty and vice.' Wittenberg held a bad pre-eminence among them. Flacius Illyricus (p. 227) 'would rather send children to a brothel, than to the High School of Wittenberg.' No discipline or godliness was known there, and '*especially among Dr. Philip's (Melancthon) disciples,*' whom people visiting the university, and expecting to find angels, discovered to be, in reality, living devils. Indeed, the students of this university were 'universally infamous (*landrühig*) for debauchery, gambling, impiety, blasphemy, cursing, drinking, and indecent language and behavior;' and though the university authorities were well aware of the scandals, they were afraid to publish their shame by expelling the guilty, who constituted the majority. At Frankfort on the Oder (1562), the students were 'so wild and undisciplined, that neither professors nor townsmen were secure of their lives.' At Tübingen, the 'habits of blasphemy, drunkenness, and debauchery,' which came under his own personal notice, called for the prompt and decided interference of Duke Christopher of Würtemberg in 1565. A few years later (1577), the students were represented in the magistrates' report to the senate as 'a godless race, like those of Sodom and Gomorrhah' and in 1583, a solemn visitation, for the sole purpose of staying or eradicating the notorious and habitual immorality, was ordered by the public authorities of the city. The accounts of the universities of Marburg (p. 480), Königsberg (p. 482), Leipsic (p. 573), Basle (p. 557), are precisely the same; and in his report on the university of Rostock, Arnold Buren frankly avows, that, 'comparing the new generation with the old ones, every right-minded man complained, and the conduct of the members themselves evinced even more clearly, that a general deterioration of morals had taken place; that crimes of every description were day by day on the increase; that instead of the virtuous gravity and youthful modesty of former days, wanton levity and unbridled licentiousness had been introduced; and that things had come now to such a pass, that from the entire frame of society, and from the morals of every class, simplicity, integrity, and purity had completely disappeared.'

"In a short time this disrepute began to produce its effect upon the attendance of the pupils. The declaration of Illyricus is an echo of the

general feeling. Parents feared to send their children to such dens of immorality: the numbers gradually diminished: the university of Basle, once so flourishing, became a desert within a few years: and at Erfurth, which at the outbreak of the Reformation had been in its highest reputation, the pupils, who in 1520 amounted to three hundred and eleven, fell to one hundred and twenty in 1522, then to seventy-two, and afterwards to thirty-four, till, in 1527, the entrances amounted to but fourteen!"

The writer concludes his review of Döllinger's learned work, with the following general summary of the view of the Reformation taken by the reformers themselves, in regard to the influence of this great revolution on the interests of this world and on those of the next. The portraiture is, indeed, a very sad one; but none the less reliable, because drawn by the early friends and admirers of the Reformation, whose testimony is alleged for each statement.

"From the variety of these extracts, and the exceeding diversity of the sources from which they are taken, it will readily be believed that our difficulty has rather been to limit than to extend them. We had originally intended to pursue the inquiry on a similar plan through various other topics, as,—the scandalous lives of its ministers, and the contempt and hatred with which, as a class, they were regarded by their flocks—the weariness of spirit, the remorse, the longing after death, even the miserable end, in many cases, by their own hands, which it entailed upon those who were actively engaged in it—the repining after the good old times, the longing for the revival of popery, and the habitual reference, on the part of the people, of all the evils which had overwhelmed the world to the new gospel which had been introduced. But we have already more than wearied out the reader's patience by these painful and revolting extracts, nor shall we venture to pursue the Reformation into the 'lower deeps' of sin and wretchedness to which it led. Even in the few, and perhaps ill-assorted extracts which we have hastily heaped together, there is enough and more than enough to fix its character as a movement claiming to be divinely directed. We are ready to allow its claims to be tested by any reasoning man, no matter how deeply prejudiced in its favor, upon these admissions of its own most zealous founders. Let him but contrast in the light of this evidence, imperfect and fragmentary as our narrow limits have made it, its great promise with its small performance, its magnificent anticipations with its miserable results—let him follow it in its career through the various countries where it found an entrance, and mark the fruits which it produced in each—where it promised peace and happiness, let him see it produce disor-

der, insubordination, murder, rebellion, divisions of class against class, sanguinary war; where it promised piety, lukewarmness, impiety, blasphemy, irreligion; where it promised purer morality, debauchery, fornication, drunkenness, revolting indecency in young and old; where it promised all the social and domestic virtues, adulteries, divorces, bigamy, fraud, avarice, hard-heartedness to the poor; where it promised the revival of true faith, confusion, skepticism, contempt of all religion, and utter unbelief; where it promised enlightenment, ignorance, barbarism, contempt of learning, and fanatical hatred of science;—let him but remember how all this is attested by those to whose dearest and most cherished hopes the admission was as gall and wormwood, and we defy him to resist the direct and palpable conclusion, that the finger of God was *not* in that unhappy movement—that the prestige of its success was hollow and unsubstantial, that its boasted advantages were a juggle and a delusion, that its lofty pretensions were but a silly mockery, and its very title a living and flagitious lie.”

---

## CHAPTER XVI.

### INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON CIVILIZATION.

- Definition—Religion, the basis—Reclaiming from barbarism—British East India possessions—Catholic and Protestant conquests—Protestant missions—Sandwich Islands—The mother of civilization—The ark amid the deluge—Rome converts the nations—Early German civilization—Mohammedanism—The Crusades—The Popes—Luther and the Turks—Luther retracts—Religious wars in Germany—Thirty Years' War—General peace—Disturbed by the Reformation—Comparison between Protestant and Catholic countries.

To *civilize*, according to lexicographers, is “to reclaim from a state of savageness and brutality.” According to its more common acceptation, however, the word *civilization* implies more than a mere reclaiming from barbarism. It embraces, as its more prominent constituent elements, enlightenment of the public mind, good government conducted on liberal principles, a certain refinement in public taste and manners, and a gentleness and polish in social intercourse.

The more fully and the more harmoniously these elements are developed together, the higher the state of civilization.

There can be no doubt that religion lies at the basis of all true civilization. A mere glance at the past history and present condition of the world must satisfy any impartial man of this great truth. Those countries only have been blessed with a high degree of civilization which have been visited by the Christian religion. Those which have not had this visitation, or which have rejected it, are in a state of barbarism, or at least of semi-barbarism. If Europe is more highly civilized than any other quarter of the globe, it is precisely because she has been brought more fully under the softening and humanizing influence of Christianity. If Africa is the lowest in the scale, it is because her people have been to a very great extent excluded from, or have shut their eyes to the blessed light of the gospel.

Asia occupies an intermediate ground between barbarism on the one hand, and a state of high civilization on the other. That portion of her population which has never received the Christian religion, still continues in a state of unmitigated barbarism. That portion which once received, but has since in a great measure lost sight of, or rejected the doctrines of Christianity, may in general be pronounced to be in a state but half-civilized. No more striking proof of the soundness of these remarks can perhaps be given, than the incontestable fact that all western Asia, embracing Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Bythinia, Mesopotamia, and Armenia, which was, during the early ages of Christianity, in a high state of civilization, has since sunk into a state of semi-barbarism, after Christianity had been either extinguished or paralyzed in its influence by Mohammedanism. Constantinople, Antioch, and Ephesus, once the centers of civilization, and the radiating points of learning, are now the seats of barbarism—all their laurels withered, and all their glory fled, perhaps for ever! Egypt and northern Africa were also, during the first ages of the Church, far advanced in civilized life. But what is their

condition now, and what has it been for many centuries, since the overthrow of Christian institutions by those of Islamism? The dark night of barbarism still broods heavily over them, though a cheering twilight of the coming dawn is beginning to brighten in Algeria. And, in Europe, those countries precisely have advanced the least in civilization which—as Russia and other more northern nations—have been less fully and powerfully acted on by the principles of the Christian religion, as unfolded from its center.

From the facts already established in the previous chapters, we may easily gather what was the influence of the Reformation on these two leading elements of civilization—free government and literary enlightenment. We think that every impartial man who will take the trouble to weigh well the Protestant evidence already accumulated on those subjects, will come to the conclusion that, so far at least as these are concerned, the influence of the Reformation was most injurious. We would not, however, be understood as denying that Protestantism subsequently exercised, at least occasionally and to some extent, a beneficial influence on the progress of society. We freely admit that Protestants have done something for the social advancement of the human race: but we maintain that Catholics have done much more, and that without the Reformation, the world would have advanced much more rapidly in civilization than it has done with its co-operation.

To begin with the first idea implied by the term—a reclaiming from barbarism—what nation or people, we would ask, has Protestantism ever reclaimed from a barbarous to a civilized condition? What nation, or even considerable portion of a nation, has it ever converted from heathenism to Christianity? It has indeed caused many to abandon the old system of religion, and to embrace its own crude and new-fangled notions: but we have yet to learn that it has brought *one* entire heathen people into the Christian fold. Many barbarous nations and tribes have been crushed or exterminated by

the onward march of its own peculiar system of exclusive civilization; but not *one*, so far as our information extends, has been converted to Christianity, or even ameliorated in social condition, through its agency.

And yet Protestantism has had ample power in its hands for this purpose, as well as ample verge for its operations. With her almost unbounded power by sea and by land, England, to say nothing of other Protestant governments, might, it would seem, have converted whole nations to Christianity, and thereby reclaimed them from barbarism. With her vast power and influence in the East Indies, she might have made at least an effort to bring the teeming nations, with their tens of millions of inhabitants, which there acknowledged her sway, into the beautiful fold of Christian civilization. But what has she actually accomplished? Has she ameliorated the civil condition of the seventy millions whom she holds in political thralldom in the east? Has she even made a serious effort, in her political capacity, to bring about this result? Have the obscene and wicked rites of paganism vanished before her powerful influence?

She has indeed crushed or exterminated whole tribes by her arms, or ground them in the dust by her tyranny, and impoverished them by her exactions! She has done much to render Christian civilization odious in their eyes: she has done little or nothing to render it amiable or attractive. She has lately goaded them to rebellion by her cruel exactions and selfish policy; and then crushed out the insurrection by the strong arm guided by superior discipline. A lust of power and of money has been the all-absorbing principle of her policy: and its effects are visible in the abiding degradation of the millions who unwillingly bow beneath her yoke. It is deemed unnecessary to multiply proofs to establish what must be apparent to every one who has even glanced at the history of the conquests and policy of England in her East India possessions. Her own writers and the official acts of parliament have boldly proclaimed these iniquities to the

world: and no one will be so skeptical as to question their truth, or to deny their enormity.\*

Happily, such has not been the case with Catholic conquests among barbarous nations. The first thing always thought of by Catholic sovereigns who established their power in heathen lands, was to introduce Christianity among the tribes whom they had subdued, and to bring about, through its agency, their gradual civilization. The Catholic missionary always accompanied the leader of Catholic maritime discovery and conquest, to soften down the horrors of war, to pour oil into the wounds of the vanquished people, and to direct their attention to sublime visions of civilization, of Religion—of heaven. The Catholic cross was always reared by the side of the banner of Catholic conquest. And the result has been, that wherever Catholic conquest has extended, there religion has been also established, and, through it, civilization has been gradually introduced.

Whoever will read attentively the annals of Spanish and Portuguese voyages of discovery and conquest in America and the Indies, will be convinced of the truth of this remark. Our countryman, Washington Irving, has done ample justice to this subject; and we confidently appeal to the evidence his magic pen has spread before the world, for a triumphant proof of our assertion.† Our attention is often directed, with a sneer of triumph, to the inferior political condition of Spanish America: but those who employ this common-place argument, and who boast of their own superior civilization and

---

\* Some modern writers, indeed, claim that England has accomplished much towards elevating the social condition of the people in the East Indies. But when you call on them for facts and specifications, they are able to present little but vague and unsatisfactory generalities. It is admitted on all hands, that very few of the natives have been converted to Christianity. Such being the case, it is difficult to see wherein their alleged social improvement is to be found.

† In his "Life of Columbus," 2 vols. 8vo. New York, 1831. See the evidence he alleges on our present subject, accumulated in a Review of Webster's Bunker Hill Speech, published in the Miscellanea.



refinement, do not reflect, or would not have us reflect, that, whereas the Spaniards and Portuguese settled down and intermarried with the aborigines, and used every effort to civilize them—in which they have partially succeeded; we in North America, with all our boasted superiority, have circumvented, goaded into war, driven from place to place, and finally almost exterminated the poor Indians, the original proprietors of our soil.\* Protestantism is heartily welcome to all the laurels of civilization it has won in this great American field!

It is rather a remarkable coincidence that, in the very first year of the Reformation—1517—the first expedition of the Spaniards for the conquest of Mexico—that under Cordova—was undertaken. Two years later, in 1519, Hernando Cortes entered upon the great enterprise which actually achieved the conquest of Mexico. On his standard was inscribed the motto: “Amici, crucem sequamur, et in hoc signo vinemus”—“Friends, let us follow the cross, and under this banner shall we conquer.” According to the account of the Spanish missionaries, who accompanied this expedition of Cortes, *six millions* of Mexicans were received into the Catholic Church by baptism during the years intervening between 1524 and 1540; the very period in which the Reformation was progressing most rapidly in Europe. It is highly probable that, by this remarkable stroke of Divine Providence, the Catholic Church thus gained probably almost as many new disciples in Spanish and Portuguese America alone, as she lost of old ones in Europe through the Reformation!†

We must admit that Protestants have made great efforts to

---

\* See Bancroft's testimonies, and other evidences on the subject, collected *ibid.*

† See article Dispatches of Hernando Cortes, in the North American Review for October, 1843. In his History of the Conquest of Mexico, Prescott quotes Father Toribio, who says that *nine millions* of converts were made within twenty years after the first advent of the Catholic missionaries. See vol. iii, p. 267.



convert heathen nations. Millions of money have been liberally bestowed for this benevolent purpose. Large bodies of missionaries, with their wives and families, have been annually sent out by Bible and other Protestant societies, to evangelize and civilize heathen lands. Not only the expenses of this numerous corps have been liberally paid, but they have had handsome salaries, and often princely establishments. But what have they done, with all the money that has been expended, and all the parade that has been made on the subject.

..... Quid.

Hic faciet tanto dignum promissor hiatu ?\*

Have they converted even *one* nation to Christianity? If they have, history is silent as to its locality.† Much was once said about the conversion of the Sandwich Islands by American Protestant missionaries; but this has all turned out, like other similar schemes of conversion, a miserable failure. The first effect of Protestant civilization in those islands was a reduction of the native population by more than one half: the next was the enriching of the missionaries themselves—a very usual occurrence, by the way, and one which exhibits the chief *advantage* of those missionary enterprises: and the third was a most disgraceful persecution of brother Christian missionaries, so much so that a Catholic potentate felt himself called on to interfere.‡ A distinguished modern writer has well remarked, that the Protestant sects have been ever doomed to sterility since their divorce from the only true spouse of Christ—the Catholic Church.§

On the other hand, what has the Catholic Church done for

\* Horace—Ars Poetica. “What will this boaster accomplish, after so much *blowing*?”

† See most abundant evidence, chiefly from Protestants themselves, in Dr. Wiseman’s “Lectures on the Catholic Religion,” 2 vols. 12mo, vol. i, lect. vi.

‡ Ibid. We have discussed this subject at some length in our Lectures on the Evidences of Catholicity.

§ Count de Maistre—Du Pape, vol. ii.

civilization? What nations has she converted to Christianity? We may answer the question by asking another. What nation or people is there, of all those on the face of the earth who have entered the Christian fold, which she has *not* been mainly instrumental in converting and civilizing? Is there even *one*? What says faithful history on the subject?

During the first four centuries of Christianity, the principal nations of Europe, as well as many of those of Asia and Africa, had been converted by missionaries sent either directly by Rome, or at least in communion and acting in concert with the Roman See. The cross of Christ had been borne in triumph to the most remote extremities of the Roman empire, which then embraced almost all of Europe and a great portion of Asia and Africa. It had been planted even in the midst of people who were beyond the boundaries of the vast territory ruled by Rome. As early as the close of the second century, St. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, could say in triumph that many barbarous nations in Germany and elsewhere, over whose heads the Roman eagle had never been reared, had already received the gospel, although they were unlettered and unacquainted with the use of paper and ink. Tertullian, a writer who flourished in the beginning of the third century, could also say, in a defense of Christianity, addressed to the Roman emperor and senate, that Christians had already filled the villages, the towns, the cities, the castles, and the armies of the Roman empire, and that they had left only the temples of paganism to their idolatrous persecutors!

In the fifth and sixth centuries, a deluge of barbarism overwhelmed the Roman empire of the west, which was already fast verging to its final downfall. The ancient Roman civilization was buried under its turbid waters. The ark of the Church alone rode out in safety the angry flood: and when its waters had subsided, the tenants of this ark, as had been done by those of its prototype of old, repopled the earth. In it were preserved, together with Christianity, the seeds of a new civilization, more refined and elevated by far, than that which

had been swept from the face of the earth by the new deluge. These were scattered broadcast over the soil of the world: the Church watered them with the tears of her maternal solicitude, and, when they had sprung up, she nurtured the plants and brought them to maturity. Thus to her alone is due the credit of having rescued the world from barbarism, and of having again carefully collected and skillfully put together the scattered elements of the new civilization. All modern improvement dates back to this era, as certainly and as necessarily as do the existence and extension of the human race to the epoch of the deluge. We owe at least as much to the Church as we do to Noah's ark.

The hordes of the north, who had trodden in the dust the haughty Roman empire, entered themselves, one by one, into the ample fold of the Church. The fierce conquerors willingly bowed their necks to receive the yoke of the conquered! Christianity thus triumphed, like her divine Founder, by being seemingly conquered for a time. It is not a little remarkable, too, that all the nations of the north were subsequently converted by missionaries sent by Rome.

Ireland was the first to enter into the Christian fold: and she became subsequently a principal instrument in the hands of Providence for converting the other northern nations. She had never been conquered by the Roman legions, nor had she been instrumental in effecting the downfall of the Roman empire. Yet was she the first nation of the north that assumed the sweet yoke of Christ. In the beginning of the fifth century, A. D. 430, Pope Celestine I. sent St. Patrick into Ireland, and St. Palladius into Scotland.\* Towards the close of the same century, in 496, St. Remigius baptized at Rheims, King Clovis and three thousand officers of his army, thus commencing successfully the conversion of the Franks, and consolidating the foundations of Christianity in France.

---

\* It is well known that among ancient writers *Scots* and *Hibernians* were often convertible terms.

Near the close of the sixth century, A. D. 591, Pope St. Gregory the Great sent St. Augustine and his forty companions into England. These converted the kingdom of Kent, and soon all England followed the example. In the seventh century, St. Kilian, sent by Pope Conon, preached the gospel in Franconia; St. Swidbert and others evangelized Friesland, Brabant, and Holland; and St. Rupert became the apostle of Bavaria. In the eighth century, St. Boniface, sent by Pope Gregory II. in 719, converted the Hessians and Thuringians, and suffered martyrdom at length in Friesland, in 755, with fifty-two of his companions. Saints Corbinian, Willibrord, and Vigilius were his co-operators in the apostleship.

In the ninth century, St. Adalbert converted Prussia: and St. Ludger became the apostle of Saxony and Westphalia, and died bishop of Munster. In the same age, St. Anscarus, archbishop of Hamburg and Bremen, preached the gospel to the Danes, and planted Christianity in Sweden, about the year 830. About the same period, the two brothers, Saints Methodius and Cyril, with the sanction of Pope John VIII., converted the Slavonians, the Russians, and the Moravians, and also Michael, king of the Bulgarians. In the tenth century, the faith was extended into Muscovy, Denmark, Gothland, Sweden, and Poland. The Normans, with their Duke Rolla, were converted in 912; and the Hungarians, with their king, St. Stephen, embraced Christianity about the year 1002.\*

Thus all the nations of Europe were successively converted to Christianity by the direct agency of the Roman Catholic Church, and by missionaries sent by Rome. Their civilization was a necessary sequel to their conversion. They were indebted for both to Rome. This was especially true in relation to the German nations. We have seen above the avowal of D'Aubigné himself on this subject. As Audin well remarks:

"It was religion that had softened the savage manners of its inhabitants, cleared its forests, peopled its solitudes, and aided in throwing off the yoke

---

\* See Church historians, *passim*.

of the Romans. Whatever poetry, music, or intellectual culture it possessed when Luther appeared, it owed to its ancient bishops. The feudal tree had first flourished on its soil. It had its electors, dukes, barons, who were often bishops or archbishops. Of all the European states, it was the one in which the influence of the Papacy had been most vividly felt.”\*

He might have added that whatever of liberty it possessed, it had also derived from Rome. She had by her influence gradually abolished the serf system, had opened sanctuaries for the oppressed, had proscribed the trial by ordeal, and had substituted for it a more rational system of judicature. She had purified and elevated the old German jurisprudence by the wise provisions of her canon law; and, by declaring the oppressed and crushed subject free from the obligation of his oath of allegiance to the oppressor, she had broken his bonds, and taught him his political rights. In a word, Rome was, for Germany more especially, the great center of civilization, and the point from which enlightenment had radiated throughout her entire territory.

The deluge of barbarian invasion having subsided, and the barbarians themselves having been converted to Christianity, a new and most appalling danger threatened European civilization, nay, the independence and the very existence of Europe. The Mohammedan imposture, commencing at Mecca in the year 622, had rapidly overspread a great part of Asia and Africa, and had penetrated into Europe, through Spain, as early as the year 711. In the east it menaced Constantinople, the capital of the Greek empire; in the south and west it threatened still more nearly European independence. Masters of northern Africa, of Spain, and of the Mediterranean, the followers of Mohammed were ready to penetrate into Europe on all sides, with the scimitar in one hand, and the Koran in the other. The consequences of their successful incursion would have been, what they had been everywhere else, the ruin of literature and liberty, the destruction of Christianity and civilization, and wide-spread ruin and desolation. When

---

\* Life of Luther, sup. cit., p. 343, 344.

ever they had penetrated, they had blighted every flower, and plucked every fruit of the existing civilization. The once flourishing provinces of Asia and Africa, which had been forced to wear their degrading yoke, had already relapsed into a state of barbarism, from which, alas! they are not yet recovered.

In this emergency, what saved European civilization and independence? What agency kept off the impending storm? The Church and the Roman Pontiffs. The latter, by their influence, succeeded in arousing Europe from her lethargy, and in awakening her to a lively sense of the threatened danger. They persuaded Christians to bury their private feuds, to combine together for the first time in the common defense, and to rally in their united strength for the defense of the cross against the invading hosts marshaled under the crescent. Long and fiercely raged the struggle; Christianity, civilization, enlightenment and liberty, and the cross, on the one hand, and Mohammedanism, barbarism, ignorance, despotism, and the crescent, on the other.

The first check given to Mohammedan conquest was in the famous victory gained over the followers of the crescent by Charles Martel, at the head of the French chivalry, near Tours, in 732. The closing events of the protracted struggle were equally glorious for the Christian cause. The battle of Lepanto, in 1571, crippled the energies of the Turks, by destroying their whole fleet; and the relief of Vienna from the beleaguering Turkish army, in 1683, by the brave Sobieski, at the head of his thirty thousand Poles, drove the Mohammedans from Western Europe, and cut off all hopes of any further European conquests by their armies.

The Popes were the very life and soul of all these Christian enterprises for repelling Turkish invasion. It was they who first conceived that master-stroke of policy which, through the crusades, carried the war into the enemies' country, and for centuries gave them enough to do at home, and thus prevented them from thinking of foreign conquests. It was they who united Europe, for the first time, in one great national

cause. It was Pope St. Pius V. who deserved the chief credit for the signal naval victory at Lepanto. It was they who ennobled chivalry, and consecrated valor, for the defense of Christian Europe. It was they who nerved for battle the arms of the brave knights of Rhodes and Malta, and inspired the heroism of the Hunniades, of the Scanderbegs, of the Cids, of the Bouillons, of the Tancreds, and of many others, who won imperishable laurels in that world-wide struggle. But for their exertions, and the blessings of God, who had promised that "the gates of hell should not prevail against His Church built on a rock," Europe would in every human probability have become, what Asia and Africa had long been, a mere degraded province of a colossal Mohammedan empire, which would have bestrode the earth, and crushed beneath its weight every principle of civilization.

Did the Reformation win any laurels in this contest? Did it strike *one* blow for the independence of Europe against the Turks; who, when it first appeared, were at the very zenith of their power, and were assuming the most threatening attitude against Europe? We will here present a few curious facts, which will show the spirit of early Protestantism on this subject.

Among the articles which Luther obstinately refused to retract at the diet of Worms, in 1521, was this strange and impious paradox: "That to war against the Turks is to oppose God!"\* In his fierce invective against the conciliatory decree which emanated from the diet of Nuremberg in 1524, he thus castigates the princes who had composed that diet:

"Christians, I beg of you, raise your hands, and pray for these blind princes, with whom heaven punishes us in its wrath. Give not alms against the Turk, who is a thousand times wiser and more pious than our princes. What success can such fools, who rebel against Christ and despise his word, hope in the war against the Turks?"†

---

\* "Proeliari adversus Turcas est repugnare Deo." Assertio articulorum per Leonem damnatorum. Opp. Lutheri, tom. ii, p. 3. Audin, p. 174.

† Luther Werke, ch. xv, p. 2, 712. Adolph Menzel, tom. i, p. 155, seq. Apud Audin, p. 286. See also Cochlæus in Acta Lutheri, folio 116.



This warning was directed against the decree of the diet, which, alarmed by the menacing attitude of the Sublime Porte, "had demanded and voted subsidies for the war against the Turks. The Catholics contributed, the Protestants refused: but the contributions of the Catholics were not sufficient to arrest the progress of Suleiman. At the head of two hundred thousand men, he advanced into Hungary, and on the 26th of September, 1529, he was about to plant his ladders against the walls of Vienna. This cowardly abandonment of their brethren is an ineffaceable stain on the Protestant party. At the approach of the enemy, who threatened the cross of Christ, all disunion should have ceased. The country was in danger; the Christian name was on the point of being blotted out from Germany; and Islamism would have triumphed, had there not been brave hearts behind the walls which the treachery of their brethren had laid bare. Honor then to those valiant chiefs, Philip Count Palatine, Nicholas von Salm, William von Regendorf, and that population of aged men, of women, and of children, who, although suffering from famine, sickness, and pestilence—for all seemed united to overwhelm them—did not despair, but drove back to Constantinople the army of Suleiman. After God, they owed their success to their valor; for the emperor, the empire, and the princes had abandoned them. Luther had cried aloud 'peace to the Turks;' and his voice was more powerful than the cry of their weeping country, and of the cross of Christ. The reader must judge between the reformed and the Catholics, and say, in what veins Christian blood flowed."\*

Subsequently indeed, when the most imminent danger had passed, and Luther had little to apprehend from the emperor or the Catholic party, he retracted his wild paradoxes, and ceased to be the apologist of the Turks. But who thanked him for his tardy, if not compulsory advocacy of European independence against Turkish invasion? All that it demonstrated was his own utter inconsistency in the whole affair, in which he did but act out his general character,—as a mere creature of impulse and of passion, guided by self-interest.

That there existed not only a feeling of secret sympathy between Luther and the Turkish sultan, but that the latter was also aware of Luther's favorable inclinations, would appear from the following remarkable passage found in Menzel's History of Germany. The incident referred to

---

\* Audin, p. 289, 290.



occurred after Luther had retracted and become reconciled with the emperor. The knowledge of this single fact suddenly arrested the progress of Suleiman's invading army!

"Suleiman had again presented himself on the frontier, at the head of an immense army, with the avowed intention of placing himself on the throne of the Western empire. All Germany flew to arms. The news of the termination of intestine dissension in Germany no sooner reached the sultan's ears, than he asked, with astonishment, '*Whether the emperor had really made peace with Martin Luther?*' And, although the Germans only mustered eighty thousand men in the field, scarcely a third of the invading army, he suddenly retreated."\*

Erasmus thus twits the Protestant party on their conduct in this whole affair:

"But you seem to forget that you refused to give Charles V., and Ferdinand, the subsidies necessary for the war against the Turks, according to the doctrine of Luther, who now however condescends to retract! Have not the gospellers advanced the startling proposition, 'that it is better to fight for the unbaptized than for the baptized Turk,' that is, for the emperor? Is it not truly ridiculous?"†

It was something more than ridiculous—which was the strongest epithet the Batavian philosopher could employ—it was utterly treacherous and lamentable; and if European civilization was still saved, and European independence still preserved, we certainly owe no thanks therefor to the Reformation. If we are still free; if we are not ground down by Turkish tyranny; if we bow to the cross instead of the crescent; we certainly owe no gratitude for these results to the Protestant party. Their sympathies were manifestly more Mohammedan than Christian; they would have rejoiced at the ascendancy of Islamism, provided only the Pope and his adherents could have been crushed and annihilated! They shared in none of the laurels won for European independence and civilization, at Lepanto, under the walls of Vienna, in Hungary, in Poland, in Albania, or at Rhodes and Malta. Their chivalry could not be awakened, nor their sympathies

---

\* Menzel's History of Germany, vol. ii, p. 253, sup. cit.

† "In Pseudo-Evangelicos." Epist. 47, Lib. xxxi.—Edit. of London, Flesher.

stirred up by any such brilliant achievements as these. And yet D'Aubigné gravely assures us, that "the Reformation saved religion, and through it society."\* Deliver us from such a salvation as this.†

We have already said something on the character of the bloody civil wars with which the Reformation desolated Germany. We compared the multitude of devastating armies, which it let loose on Europe, to those which had desolated her fair provinces in the fifth and sixth centuries. This parallel is not exaggerated: it is founded on the sad records of history. In reading of the dreadful tragedies enacted in the war of the peasants and of the Anabaptists, and more particularly in the Thirty Years' War, we are forcibly reminded of the devastations which the early Northmen left in their course. Especially does the parallel hold good, in respect to the ravaging of Italy and Rome by the Lutheran troops under the Constable Bourbon, referred to above. Münzer, Storck, and Stübner strongly remind us of Attila, Totila, and Genseric. All were, if not "the scourges of God," at least, in another sense, the scourges of man and of society. They were all fierce wild animals, let loose for a time, to devastate the blooming garden of European civilization.

The following address of Münzer to his associates in rebellion we give, as one out of the many similar specimens of the infuriate Vandalism of the sixteenth century:

"Are you then asleep, my brethren! Come to the fight, the fight of heroes. All Franconia has risen up: the Master will now show himself: the wicked shall fall. At Fulda, in Easter week, *four pestiferous churches were destroyed*. The peasants of Klegan have taken up arms. Although you were but three confessors of Jesus, you would not have to fear a hundred thousand enemies. Draw, draw, draw—now is the time: the impious shall be chased like dogs. No mercy for those atheists: they will beset

---

\* D'Aubigné, vol. i, p. 67, sup. cit.

† In his History of the Reformation, Ranké endeavors to vindicate Luther, by alleging his opinions after he had become reconciled with the emperor. We have given his declarations made previously, when the danger to Germany was the greatest.

you ; they will blubber like children—but spare them not. It is the command of God by Moses.—Draw, draw, draw—the fire burns: let not the blood grow cold on your sword-blades. Pink, pank, on the anvil of Nimrod: let the towers fall under your stroke. Draw, draw, draw—now is the day: God leads you on; follow Him.”\*

Schiller, a German Protestant, has most graphically painted the horrors of the Thirty Years’ War, and the desolation which it occasioned in Germany. The master hand of Shlegel thus traces its effects on German civilization:

“Never was there a religious war so widely extended and so complicated in its operations, so protracted in its duration, and entailing misery on so many generations. That period of thirty years’ havoc, in which the *early civilisation, and the noblest energies of Germany were destroyed*, forms in history the great wall of separation between the ancient Germany, which in the middle age was the most powerful, flourishing, and wealthy country in Europe; and the new Germany of recent and happier times, which is now gradually recovering from her long exhaustion and general desolation; and is rising again into light and life from the sepulchral darkness—the night of death, to which her ancient disputes had consigned her.”†

It thus required full two centuries for Germany to recover from the terrible blow to her civilization dealt her by the ruthless Reformation. Even Villers, the champion laureate of the Reformation, is compelled to admit, that “the Thirty Years’ War left Germany in a sort of stupor—in a barbarism almost total.”‡

We here subjoin from the Dublin Review the analysis of Dr. Döllinger’s testimony, gathered from the early reformers themselves and their immediate disciples, in regard to the social effects of the Reformation in Germany. We need scarcely repeat, that this testimony is wholly unexceptionable; because the witnesses saw what they relate, and were favorable to the change of religion.

\* Luther Werke—Edit. Altenburg vol. iii, p. 134. Menzel, p. 200-2—Apud Audin.

† Philosophy of History, vol. ii, p. 232, American Edit.

‡ Essai sur l’esprit et l’influence de la reform. de Luther, p. 274.—Apud Robelot, 392.

## THE SOCIAL RESULTS OF THE REFORMATION.

"If every written evidence of the injury inflicted on society by the preaching of the reformers had been lost or destroyed, the War of the Peasants, and the Anabaptist atrocities, would remain as indisputable monuments of its unhappy and fatal influence. It would be tedious to appeal to contemporary writers for proofs of the direct connection of this sanguinary outbreak with the first principles professed and preached by Luther. Although he himself disclaimed and denounced the misguided men who but carried out his principles too faithfully in practice, their proceeding was not only (as he himself admits in a passage already cited) vindicated by themselves, but is recognized by numberless writers of the times, as the natural, if not the legitimate, consequence of Luther's teaching. But in truth, the whole framework of society is represented by the writers and preachers of that day as in a state of complete and hopeless dissolution; class set against class, subjects against rulers, peasants against nobles, poor against rich, flock against pastor. 'If you look around upon the society of the present day,' asks Burenus, 'what age or what rank will you find that is not changed, and grievously unlike to the generation that is gone by? What rank or condition has not fallen away, and wandered far from the habits and institutes of our forefathers?' 'The father,' says Leopold Dick, 'is no longer safe from the son, the son from the father; the daughter from the mother, nor the mother from the daughter—the citizen is not safe from his fellow-citizen, the rich man from the poor; every thing is turned upside down, without discrimination and without order; so universally and so uncontrolledly does deceit [*ἡ διαβολή*] nowadays pervade the world, bringing frenzy, strife, and contention in her train.' 'Such is the depravity of living,' says Joachim Camerarius, 'such the corruption of morals, such is the wretchedness and confusion, both public and private, of all ages, sexes, ranks, and conditions, that I fear all piety and virtue are at an end.' And in another place he declares that 'nothing is so daring as to be beyond the reach of their cupidity or their violence. Neither reason, nor moderation, nor law, nor morality, nor duty, will serve as a restraint; not even the fear of their fellow-men, nor the shame of posterity.' Even in Luther's time, the complaints of the 'insubordination, the arrogance, and the pride of the young, and in general of all classes,' had become most universal. They had grown so 'wild and licentious as to be utterly uncontrollable—indifferent to the authority of parents, masters, and magistrates.' 'Every one,' says Melancthon, 'strives with his neighbor to obtain unbounded liberty and unrestricted gratification of all his desires; every one tries to gain money by every unjust act, pillages his neighbor for his own profit, takes from others to increase his own stores, and seeks advantages for himself in every way.'

"We might pursue this through numberless other writers, but we have said enough to show the extent of the evil; and we shall only add, that the great source from which it all flows, is discoverable even through the interested declamations of the great reformer himself. 'The people,' he writes, 'stick to the idea of the gospel.' "*Eh!*" say they, "*Christ proclaims liberty for us in the gospel, does he not? Well then, we will work no more, but eat and make merry!*" And thus every boor who but knows how to reckon five, seizes upon the corn-land, the meadows, and the woods, of the monasteries, and carries every thing according to his own will, under the pretext of the gospel.' Here was the true root of the evil. It was all very well for Luther to express his 'mortification' [verdrenst] at these results. But results they were, and natural results, of his teaching. He had sown the wind, and we need not wonder that he reaped the whirlwind; nor need we any longer be surprised at Brentius' good humored, though most cutting jest, that 'there was no need to warn Protestants against relying on good works, for they had not any good works to rely on.' "

From the facts hitherto alleged, the reader will be enabled to judge what was the relative influence on civilization of Catholicism and of the Reformation. He will also be able to gather the more immediate influence of the latter revolution on civilization in Germany, its cradle and first theater of action. To estimate this influence, however, more nearly and more correctly, we must see what was the condition of Germany in regard to civilization before, and what it became immediately after, the change of religion.

Before it, a general peace reigned: the elements of civilized life were all in a state of healthy growth and of rapid development: every thing bade fair for the inauguration of a very high state of refinement and civilization. For the development of these, peace is as necessary, as it is for the cultivation of letters. D'Aubigné himself speaks of the great advantages to civilization of the general peace secured to Germany in 1496, by the wise policy of the Emperor Maximilian. He writes:

"For a long time the numerous members of the Germanic body had labored to disturb one another. Nothing had been seen but confusion, quarrels, wars incessantly breaking out between neighbors, cities, and chiefs. Maximilian had laid a solid basis of public order, by instituting the Imperial

Chamber appointed to settle all differences between the states. The Germans, after so many confusions and anxieties, saw a new era of safety and repose. The condition of affairs powerfully contributed to harmonize the public mind. It was now possible in the cities and peaceful valleys of Germany to seek and adopt ameliorations, which discord might have banished.”\*

He continues, with not a little simplicity: “We may add, that it is in the bosom of peace, that the gospel loves most to gain its blessed victories.”† He means this of course for the *gospel* of Luther—but did not this same gospel break in, with its accents of discord, and its fierce spirit of feud and bloodshed, upon the general peace, secured to Germany by a Catholic potentate, in Catholic times? Did it not by its truculent war-cry, mar the lovely beauty of the peaceful scene he had just described? Did it not ruthlessly rend with dissension that “public mind” which before so beautifully “harmonized?” Did it not evoke from the abyss that fell spirit of “discord,” which “banished from the cities and peaceful valleys of Germany” all relish for “seeking and adopting ameliorations” in the social condition? Did it not, for more than a century, tear and desolate society with civil feuds and bloody wars? And is it not supremely ridiculous, as Erasmus says, to hear men of sense thus uttering absurdities which they themselves supply evidence for refuting? From the principles laid down by D’Aubigné himself, it is almost intuitively evident, that the Reformation of Luther was highly injurious in its influence on the progress of civilization.

What have been the great results of Protestant and of Catholic influence on modern civilization? What is the present relative social condition of Catholic and of Protestant countries in Europe? In some respects, we are free to avow, the latter are far in advance of the former. They have adopted with more eagerness, and carried out with more success, what may be called the utilitarian system, which in fact owes its origin to the Reformation. They excel in commerce and speculation, in which they have greatly outwitted their more

---

\* D’Aubigné, vol. i, p. 76, 77.

† Ibid.

simple, perhaps, because more honest neighbors. They far excel in stock-jobbing, and are adepts in all the mysteries of exchange. They surpass in banking, and they have issued many more notes "promising to pay," than their neighbors: though the latter, especially in Spain, seldom fail to pay without any "promises" to that effect; nor have they ever been known to redeem their pledges by bankruptcy or repudiation—an easy modern—shall we add Protestant?—method to pay off old debts!

Protestant countries have also published more books on political economy and the "wealth of nations:" they have also excelled in manufactures and in machinery. But the modern utilitarian plan of conducting the latter, in England more particularly, has contributed not a little to impoverish and debase the lower orders of the people:—which, however, according to the doctrine of that most fashionable theory, is not at all opposed to the "wealth of nations;" for this is entirely compatible with the general poverty of the masses!

But in enlightenment of mind, and in gentleness of manners, and in the general features and in the suavity of social intercourse, do Protestant countries in Europe—for we wish not here to speak of our own country, which is not strictly Protestant—really surpass Catholic nations? We think not. We believe the balance, if fairly poised, would rather incline in favor of the latter. We have shown, that in point of general learning and enlightenment, Catholic countries compare most advantageously with those that are Protestant. This we think we have established on unexceptionable Protestant authority. In point of refinement and polish of manners, Catholic France is avowedly in advance of all other nations. The Spanish gentleman is perhaps the noblest and best type of elevated human nature. The warm-hearted, courteous, and refined politeness of Italy and Ireland, compares most favorably with the coldness and the blunt selfishness of England, and we are tempted to add, of Protestant Germany and Northern Europe.

In a word, the south of Europe, which has continued under Catholic influence, will suffer nothing by being brought into comparison, in regard to all the features of refined intercourse, with the cold, calculating north, which has, to a great extent, embraced the doctrines of the Reformation. Though not illumined with the new "northern light," which has fitfully shone on the minds of the Protestants for three centuries, they are still, to say the least, as enlightened, as polished, as refined, and as highly civilized, as their more fortunate neighbors. The steady light of Catholicism, which shed its blessed rays on their forefathers, has been luminous enough to guide their footsteps in the pathway of true civilization.



## CONCLUSION.

WE have now completed our task; how well, the public will best judge. We have examined the principal false statements of D'Aubigné; and, in doing so, we have also glanced occasionally at his frequent inconsistencies and absurdities. To have followed him in detail throughout his tedious history, to have convicted him of unfair or false statements on almost every page, to have unmasked his hypocrisy and laid bare his contradictions, would have imposed on us an almost endless labor. Yet this would have been really less difficult, perhaps, than the task we have performed. For it is much easier to grapple with an adversary, page by page, and sentence by sentence, than to cull out from his pages, and to refute, such general misstatements as are of most importance, and as cover the main ground of the controversy. The former method is a kind of light skirmishing; the latter is a more serious and weighty species of warfare.

A German Protestant historian of far more weight than D'Aubigné, furnishes us with the following appreciation of Luther and of his work, the Reformation:

"He (Luther) died in sorrow, but in the conscientious belief of having faithfully served his God, and, although the great and holy work, begun by him, had been degraded and dishonored partly by his personal faults, although the Reformation of the church had been rendered subservient to the views of a policy essentially unchristian, the good cause was destined to outlive these transient abuses. The seeds, scattered by this great reformer, produced, it is true, thorns during his lifetime, *and during succeeding centuries*, but burst into blossom, as the storms through which the Reformation passed gradually lulled."\*

We leave this not very consistent, nor very candid statement of opinion to speak for itself. It will puzzle many to understand, how a work, which was thus marred both by the personal faults of Luther, and the essentially unchristian policy of his more powerful adherents, could have been

---

\* Menzel, History of Germany, vol. ii, p. 263.

“holy;” or how the seeds which, during Luther’s lifetime, and for *succeeding centuries*, avowedly produced only thorns, can be expected to burst into blossom! If we are to judge the tree by its fruits, according to the rule laid down by Christ, we are bound, from these enforced admissions of the German historian, to come to the conclusion, that Luther’s Reformation was not, and could not be, the work of God, but that it originated in a different source altogether.

Though in the course of the preceding essay, we have been compelled to allege strong facts and to use plain language, yet we hope we have carefully abstained from employing any epithets unnecessarily harsh or offensive. God is our witness, that we have not meant wantonly to wound the feelings of any one. Deeply as we feel, and sincerely as we deplore, the evils of which the Reformation has been the cause—the unsettling of faith, the numberless sects, the bitter and acrimonious disputes, and the consequent rending of society into warring elements—yet do we feel convinced, that all these crying evils, which originated in a spirit of hatred and revolt, can be healed only by the contrary principle of love and charity. The bitter experience of three centuries has proved, that a re-union among Christians can not be brought about, but by a return to the bosom of the Catholic Church of those who, in an evil hour for themselves and for the world, strayed from its pale. It is only in the OLD PATHS, hallowed by the footsteps of martyrs, of saints, and of virgins, that perfect peace and security can be found. To all the lovers of unity, we would then say in the words of God’s plaintive prophet:

“Thus saith the Lord: stand ye on the ways, and see, and ask for THE OLD PATHS, which is the good way, and walk ye in it; and you shall find refreshment to your souls.”\*

Refreshment and peace can be found no where else. All other expedients for re-establishing religious union on a solid

---

\* Jeremiah, vi: 16.

basis have been tried in vain. It is only in communion with the Chair of Peter—the rock on which Christ built His Church—that Christians can be secured in unity and peace.

In conclusion, we republish the closing chapter of Audin's *Life of Luther*, in which he sums up with considerable learning and ability, the general Protestant evidence bearing on the character of the Reformation in Germany. We extract it from the translation of Turnbull, and we give it to the American public, not only because we deem it appropriate as a general resumé on the subject, but because it is omitted in the American translation. It is entitled :

#### THE TRIBUNAL OF THE REFORMATION.

"We had intended to conclude our work by an examination into the influence which the Lutheran Reformation has had on the morals, learning, arts, and polity of Germany and Europe. But such an inquiry would demand a volume rather than a chapter; besides, the subject has already been profoundly treated by Dr. Marx and Robelot. We ourselves, in proportion as the facts of history appear to us, have endeavored to penetrate its causes, and judge of its effects. Nevertheless, it has seemed to us that a rapid analysis of the principal features of the Reformation, as traced by Protestant pens, which even the prejudiced reader can not reject, should find a place here; and this evidence of dissentients must serve as a final judgment in favor of the Catholic historian. Once more, therefore, the Reformation shall judge itself.

"The Reformation was a revolution, and they who rebelled against the authority of the Church were revolutionists.\* However slightly you look into the constitution of the Church, you will be convinced that the Reformation possessed the character of an insurrection.†

"What is the meaning of this fine word, Reformation? Amelioration, doubtless. Well, then, with history before us, it is easy to show that it was only a prostration of the human mind. Glutted with the wealth of which it robbed the Catholics, and the blood which it shed, it gives us, instead of the harmony and Christian love of which it deprived our ancestors, nothing but dissensions, resentments, and discords.‡ No, the Reformation was not

---

\* *Bemerk. eines Protest. in Preussen über die Tzschirner'schen Anfeindungen*, etc., 1824, p. 52.    † Steffens, quoted by Höninghaus, p. 354, tom. i.

‡ Cobbett, *History*, etc., p. 4.

an era of happiness and peace; it was only established by confusion and anarchy.\* Do you feel your heart beat at the mention of justice and truth? Acknowledge, then, what it is impossible to deny,—that Luther must not be compared with the apostles. The apostles came teaching in the name of Jesus Christ their Master, and the Catholics are entitled to ask us from whom Luther had his mission? We can not prove that he had a mission direct or indirect.† Luther perverted Christianity; he withdrew himself criminally from the communion in which regeneration was alone possible.‡

“It has been said that all Christendom demanded a reformation;—who disputes it? But, long before the time of Luther, the Papacy had listened to the complaints of the faithful. The Council of Lateran had been convened to put an end to the scandals which afflicted the Church.§ The Papacy labored to restore the discipline of the early ages, in proportion as Europe, freed from the yoke of brute force, became politically organized, and advanced with slow but sure step to civilization. Was it not at that time, that the source of all religious truth was made accessible to scientific study, since, by means of the watchful protection of the Papacy, the Holy Scriptures were translated into every language? The New Testament of Erasmus, dedicated to Leo X., had preceded the quarrel about indulgences.||

“A reformer should take care that, in his zeal to get rid of manifest abuses, he does not at the same time shake the faith and its wholesome institutions to the foundation.¶ When the reformers violently separated themselves from the Church of Rome, they thought it necessary to reject every doctrine taught by her.\*\* Luther, that spirit of evil, who scattered gold with dirt, declared war against the institutions, without which the Church could not exist: he destroyed unity.†† Who does not remember that exclamation of Melancthon: ‘We have committed many errors, and have made good of evil without any necessity for it.’‡‡

“In justification of the brutal rupture of Germany with Rome, the scandals of the clergy are alleged. But if at the period of the Reformation there were priests and monks in Germany whose conduct was the cause of regret to Christians, their number was not larger than it had been previously. When Luther appeared, there was in Germany a great number of Catholic

\* Lord Fitz William's Briefe des Atticus. In's Deutsche übersetzt von Ph. Müller, 1834, p. 33. † Bemerkungen eines Protestanten.

‡ Novalis, Höninghaus, l. c., p. 356.

§ Menzel, Neuere Geschichte, pp. 3, 5, et seq.

|| Schröckh, l. c, tom. iv, pref. ¶ Vogt, Historisches Testament, tom. 5.

\*\* Schröckh, l. c, tom. ix, p. 1805.

†† Kirchhoff Auch einige Gedenken über die Wiederherstellung der Protestant. Kirche, 1817. ‡‡ Melanch. lib. iv, cap. xix.

prelates whose piety the reformers themselves have not hesitated to admire.\*

“What pains they take to deceive us! In books of every size they teach us, even at the present day, that the beast, the man of sin, the w—— of Babylon, are the names which God has given in His Scriptures to the Pope and the Papacy! Can it be imagined that Christ, who died for our sins, and saved us by His blood, would have suffered that for ten or twelve centuries His Church should be guided by such an abominable wretch?—that He would have allowed millions of His creatures to walk in the shadow of death?—and that so many generations should have had no other pastor but Antichrist?†

“Luther mistook the genius of Christianity in introducing a new principle into the world; the immediate authority of the Bible as the sole criterion of the truth.‡ If tradition is to be rejected, it follows that the Bible can not be authoritatively explained but by acquired knowledge; in a word, human interpretation based upon its comprehension of the Greek and Hebrew languages. So, by this theory, the palladium of orthodoxy is to be found in a knowledge of foreign tongues; and living authority is replaced by a dead letter; a slavery a thousand times more oppressive than the yoke of tradition.§ Has any dogmatist succeeded in drawing up a confession of faith by means of the Bible, which could not be attacked by means of reason?|| This formula, that the Bible must be the ‘*unicum principium theologiæ*,’ is the source of contradictory doctrines in Protestant theology; hence this question arises: ‘What Protestant theology is there in which there are not errors more or less?’¶ It was the Bible that inspired all the neologists of the sixteenth century; the Bible that they made use of to persecute and condemn themselves as heretics.\*\* When Luther maintained that the Bible contains the enunciation of all the truths of which a knowledge is necessary to salvation, and that no doctrine which is not distinctly laid down in the Bible can be regarded as an article of faith, he did not imagine that the time was at hand when every body, from this very volume, would form a confession for himself, and reject all others which contradicted his individual creed. This necessity for inquiry so occupies the minds of men at the present day, that the principal articles of the original creed are rejected by those who call themselves the disciples of Jesus.††

---

\* Bretschneider, *der Simonismus*, p. 168.

† Cobbett.

‡ Novalis, *Fr. von Hardenberg's Schriften*, 1826.

§ Schelling, *Vorlesungen über das akademische Studium*, p. 200.

|| Fischer, *Zur Einleitung in die Dogmatik*, p. 219.

¶ Von Langsdorf, *Blützen der protest. Theol.*, 1829, p. 623.

\*\* Jenär's *Allg. Literaturzeitung*, 1821, No. 48.

†† Wix, *Betrachtungen über die Zweckmässigkeit*, 1819.

"But what are we to understand by the Bible? The question was a difficult one to solve even at the beginning of the Reformation, when Luther, in his preface to the translation of the Bible, laid down a difference between the canonical books, by preferring the Gospel of St. John to the three other evangelists; by depreciating the Epistle of St. James as an epistle of straw, that contained nothing of the gospel in it, and which an apostle could not have written, since it attributes to works a merit which they did not possess.\* It was in the Bible that Luther discovered these two great truths of salvation, which he revealed to the world at the beginning of his apostleship—the slavery of man's will, and the impeccability of the believer.

"It is said in Exodus, chapter ix, that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh. It was questioned whether these words were to be construed literally? This Erasmus rightly denied, and it roused the doctor's wrath. Luther, in his reply, furiously attacks the fools who, calling reason to their aid, dare call for an account from God why He condemns or predestines to damnation innocent beings before they have even seen the light. Truly, Luther, in the eyes of all God's creatures, must appear a prodigy of daring, when he ventures to maintain that no one can reach heaven unless he adopts the slavery of the human will. And it is not merely by the spirit of disputation, but by settled conviction that he defends this most odious of all ideas. He lived and died teaching that horrible doctrine, which the most illustrious of his disciples,—among others Melancthon and Matthew Albert of Reutlingen,—condemned.† 'How rich is the Christian!' repeated Luther; 'even though he wished it, he can not forfeit heaven by any stain; believe, then, and be assured of your salvation: God in eternity can not escape you. Believe, and you shall be saved; repentance, confession, satisfaction, good works, all these are useless for salvation: it is sufficient to have faith.'‡

"Is not this a fearful error,—a desolating doctrine? If you demonstrate to Luther its danger or absurdity, he replies that you blaspheme the Spirit of Light.§ Neither attempt to prove to him that he is mistaken; he will tell you that you offend God. No, no, my brother, you will never convince me that the Holy Spirit is confined to Wittenberg any more than to your person.||

"Not content with maledictions, Luther then turns himself to prophecy;

\* Menzel, l. c., p. 165.

† Plank, tom. ii, pp. 113–131. The work of Albert Reutlingen is entitled, Vom rechten Branch der ewigen Vorschung Gotten wider die hochfahrenden Geister, fleischliche Klugheit und Fürwitz: Aug., 1525.

‡ Luther, De Captivitate Babil. § V. Mathisson, Prosaische Schriften.

|| Œcolamp. Antwort auf Luther's Vorrede zum Syngamma: E. Halle tom. xx, p. 727.

he announces that his doctrine, which proceeds from heaven, will gain, one by one, all the kingdoms of the world. He says of Zuingli's explanation of the Eucharist: 'I am not afraid of this fanatical interpretation lasting long.' On the other hand, Zuingli predicted that the Swiss creed would be handed down from generation to generation, crossing the Elbe and the Rhine. Prophet against prophet, if success be the test of truth, Luther will inevitably have to yield in this point.\*

"The Reformation, which at first was entirely a religious phenomenon, soon assumed a political character: it could not fail to do so. When people began to exclaim, like Luther, on the house-tops, 'the Emperor Charles V. ought not to be supported longer, let him and the Pope be knocked on the head;' (Opera, Jenæ, tom. vii, p. 278;) that 'he is an excited madman, a bloodhound, who must be killed with pikes and clubs;'+ how could civil society continue subject to authority? It was natural that the monk's virulent writings against the bishops' spiritual power should be reduced by the subjects of the ecclesiastical superiors into a political theory. When he proclaimed that the yoke of priests and monks must be shaken off, we might expect that this wild appeal would be directed against the tithes which the people paid to the prelates and the abbots.† The Saxon's doctrine being based solely on the Holy Scriptures, the peasant considered himself authorized in virtue of their text to break violently with his lord: hence, that long war between the cottage and the castle. This it was that made Erasmus write sorrowfully to Luther: 'You see that we are now reaping the fruits of what you sowed. You will not acknowledge the rebels; but they acknowledge you, and they know only too well, that many of your disciples, who clothed themselves in the mantle of the gospel, have been the instigators of this bloody rebellion. In your pamphlet against the peasants, you in vain endeavor to justify yourself. It is you who have raised the storm by your publications against the monks and the prelates and you say that you fight for gospel liberty, and against the tyranny of the great! From the moment that you began your tragedy, I foresaw the end of it.'‡

"That civil war, in which Germany had to mourn the loss of more than a hundred thousand of her children, was the consequence of Luther's preaching. It is fortunate that, through the efforts of a Catholic prince, Duke George of Saxony, it was speedily brought to an end. Had it lasted but a few years longer, of all the ancient monuments with which Germany was filled, not a single vestige would have remained. Karlstadt might then

---

\* Plank, l. c., tom. ii, p. 764, note.

† Kern, *Der Protestantismus und Kathol.*, p. 32.

‡ Menzel, l. c, tom. i, pp. 167-69.

§ Ibid., pp. 174-78.

have sat upon their ruins, and sung, with his Bible in his hand, the downfall of the images. The iconoclast's theories, all drawn from the word of God, held their ground in spite of Luther, and dealt a fatal blow to the arts.

"When a gorgeous worship requires magnificent temples, imposing ceremonies, and striking solemnities; when religion presents to the eye sensible images as objects of public veneration; when earth and heaven are peopled with supernatural beings, to whom imagination can lend a sensible form; then it is that the arts, encouraged and ennobled, reach the zenith of their splendor and perfection. The architect, raised to honors and fortune, conceives the plans of those basilicas and cathedrals, whose aspect strikes us with religious awe, and whose richly-adorned walls are ornamented with the finest efforts of art. Those temples and altars are decorated with marbles and precious metals, which sculpture has fashioned into the similitude of angels, saints, and the images of illustrious men. The choirs, the jubes, the chapels, and sacristies are hung with pictures on all sides. Here Jesus expires on the cross; there he is transfigured on Mount Thabor. Art, the friend of imagination, which delights only in heaven, finds there the most sublime creations,—a St. John, a Cecilia, above all a MARY—that patroness of tender hearts, that virgin model to all mothers, that mediatrix of graces, placed between man and his God, that august and amiable being, of whom no other religion presents either the resemblance or the model. During the solemnities, the most costly stuffs, precious stones, and embroidery, cover the altars, vessels, priests, and even the very walls of the sanctuary. Music completes the charm by the most exquisite strains, by the harmony of the choir. These powerful incentives are repeated in a hundred different places; the metropolises, parishes, the numerous religious houses, the simple oratories, sparkle with emulation to captivate all the powers of the religious and devout mind. Thus a taste for the arts becomes general, by means of so potent a lever, and artists increase in number and rivalry. Under this influence the celebrated schools of Italy and Flanders flourished; and the finest works which now remain to us testify the splendid encouragement which the Catholic religion lavished upon them.

"After this natural progress of events, it can not be doubted that the Reformation has been unfavorable to the fine arts, and has very much restrained the exercise of them. It has severed the bonds which united them to religion, which sanctified them, and secured for them a place in the veneration of the people. . . . The Protestant worship tends to disenchant the material imagination; it makes fine churches, and statues, and paintings unnecessary; it renders them unpopular, and takes from them one of their most active springs.\*

---

\* Charles Villers, *Essai sur l'Esprit et l'Influence de la Reformation*, pp. 267-69.



"The peasants' war was soon succeeded by the spoliation of the monasteries; 'an invasion of the most sacred of all rights, more important, in certain respects, than liberty itself,—property.'\* From that time not a day passed without Luther preaching up the robbery of the religious houses. To excite the greed of the princes whom he wished to secure to his views, he loved to direct their attention to the treasures which the abbeys, cloisters, sacristies, and sanctuaries contained. 'Take them,' he said; 'all these are your own,—all belong to you.' Luther was convinced, that to the value of the golden remonstrances which shone on the Catholic altars he was indebted for more than one conversion. In a moment of humor he said, 'The gentry and princes are the best Lutherans; they willingly accept both monasteries and chapters, and appropriate their treasures.'†

"The landgrave of Hesse, to obtain authority for giving his arm to two lawful wives, took care to make the wealth of the monasteries glitter in the eyes of the church of Wittenberg, so that as the price of their permission he was willing to give it to the Saxon ministers.‡ The plunder of church property preached by Luther, will be the eternal condemnation of the Protestants. Though Naboth's vineyard may serve as a bait or reward for apostasy, it can not justify crime.

"A laureate of the Institute has discovered grounds for palliating this blow to property. He congratulates the princes who embraced the Reformation for having, by means of the ecclesiastical property, filled their coffers, paid their debts, applied the confiscated wealth to useful establishments, clubs, universities, hospitals, orphanages, retreats, and rewards for the old servants of the state.§

"But Luther himself took care, on more than one occasion, to denounce the avarice of the princes who, when once masters of the monastic property, employed its revenues for the support of mistresses and packs of hounds. We remember the eloquent complaints which he uttered in his old age against these carnal men, who left the Protestant clergy in destitution, and did not even pay the schoolmasters their salaries. He mourned then, but it was too late. Sometimes the chastisement of heaven fell, even in this life, on the spoiler; and Luther has mentioned instances of several of those iron hands, who, after having enriched themselves by the plunder of a monastery, church, or abbey, fell into abject poverty.|| Besides, we will admit that Luther never thought of consoling the plundered monks, by asserting, like Charles Villers, that 'one of the finest effects of these terrible commotions

---

\* J. J. Rousseau, *Discours sur l' Economie Politique*.

† Von beider Gestalt des Sacraments : Witt., 1528.

‡ See the chapter of Audin's *Life of Luther*, entitled *Bigamy of the landgrave of Hesse*. § Charles Villers, *Essai*, p. 104. || *Symposiac*, c. iv.

which unsettle all properties, the fruits of social institutions, is to substitute for them greatness of mind, virtues, and talents, the fruits of nature exclusively.\*

"If the triumph of the peasants in the fields of Thuringia might have been an irreparable misfortune to Germany and to Christianity, we can not deny that Luther's appeal to the secular arm, to suppress the rebellion, may have thoroughly altered the character of the first Reformation. Till then it had been established by preaching; but from the moment of that bloody episode, it required the civil authority to move it. The sword, therefore, took the place of the word; and to perpetuate itself, the Reformation was bound to exaggerate the theory of passive obedience.† One of the distinguished historians of Heidelberg, Carl Hagen, has recently favored us with some portions of the political code in which Protestantism commands subjects to be obedient to the civil power, even when it commands them to commit sin.‡

"Thus the democratic element, first developed by the Reformation, was effaced, to become absorbed in the despotic. It was no longer the people, but the prince who chose or rejected the Protestant minister. When the landgrave of Hesse consulted Melancthon, in 1525, as to the line he should pursue in the appointment of a pastor, the doctor told him that he had the right to interfere in the election of ministers, and that if he surmounted the struggles into which the word of God had involved him, he ought not to commit that sacred word but to such preacher as seemed best to him (*vernünftigen*); in other terms, observes the historian, to him whom the civil power thinks competent (*den welchen die Obrigkeit dafür hält*). And Martin Bucer contrived to extend Melancthon's theory, by constituting the civil power supreme judge of religious orthodoxy, by conferring on it the right of ultimate decision in questions of heresy, and of punishing, if necessary, by fire and sword, innovators, who are a thousand times more culpable, he says, than the robber or murderer, who only steal the material bread and slay the body, while the heretic steals the bread of life and kills the soul.§

"Intolerance then entered into the councils of the Reformation. It was no longer with the peasants that Luther declared war. Whoever did not believe in his doctrines was denounced as a rebel; in the Saxon's eyes, the

\* Charles Villers, *Essai*, p. 103.

† Carl Hagen, *Neues Verhältniss zu den öffent. Gewalten*, tom. 2, p. 151.

‡ "So müsse der Unterthan gehorchen, auch wenn die Obrigkeit etwas wider das Gebot Gottes befehle," l. c, p. 155.

§ Carl Hagen, l. c, pp. 152, 154, et seq.

peasant was only an enemy to be despised; the real Satan was Karlstadt, Zuingli, and Krautwald.\*

"His disciples were no longer satisfied with plundering the monasteries, they desired to live in ease; they must have servants, a fine house, a well-supplied table, and plenty of money.† We are initiated into the private life of the reformers by a zealous Protestant, a patrician of Nuremberg.

"The struggle then was no longer with piety and knowledge, but with power and influence. Every city and town had its own Lutheran pope.‡ At Nuremberg, Osiander was a regular pacha. Those who among the Protestants endeavored to reprove his scandalous ostentation, were abused and maligned.§ When he ascended the pulpit, his fingers were adorned with diamonds which dazzled the eyes of his hearers.||

"The religious disputes which disturbed men's minds in Germany retarded, rather than advanced, the march of intellect. Blind people who fought furiously with each other could not find the road to truth. These quarrels were only another disease of the human mind.¶ Although printing served to disseminate the principles of the reformers, the sudden progress of Lutheranism, and the zeal with which it was embraced, prove that reason and reflection had no part in their development.\*\*

"Villers has drawn a brilliant sketch of the influence which the Reformation exercised over biblical criticism. It may be said that criticism of the Scripture text was unknown previous to the time of Luther; and if by this is meant that captious, whimsical, and shuffling criticism which De Wette has so justly condemned,—certainly so. But that which relates to languages, antiquities, the knowledge of times, places, authors,—in a word, hermeneutics, was known and practiced in our schools before the Reformation.

\* "Und nun erst habe man mit dem eigentlichen Satan zu kämpfen. Luther an Joh. Hess, 22 April, 1526.—De Wette, tom. iii, p. 104.

† Sunt apud nos concionatores bini, qui sub initium centum aureorum stipendio ac victu tanto pro se et famulis suis professi, cæterum quàm viderent, se jam populo persuasisse, centum quinquaginta exegerunt, ac paulo post ultra habitationem propriam et victum splendidum ducantur petiere aureos, aut se abituros sunt minati.

‡ ... "Fast Jede Stadt und jeder ort hatte seinen lutherischen Papst."

§ Dienigen, welche sich über dieses Feilschen mit dem Worte Gottes aufhielten wurden von ihnen gescholten."—Ibid., p. 187.

|| ... "Er trug immer Ringe an den Fingern, selbst wenn er predigte."—Epist. Erasmi: Lond. Carl Hagen, l c, p. 188.

¶ Voltaire, Essai sur les mœurs des nations, quoted by Maleville, Discours sur l'influence de la Réformation, p. 141.

\*\* Hume, History of the House of Tudor under Henry VII, ch. iii.

mation, as is proved by the works of Cajetan and Sadoletus, and a multitude of learned men whom Leo X. had encouraged and rewarded. We have seen besides, in the history of the Reformation, what that vain science has produced. It was by means of his critical researches that, from the time of Luther, Karlstadt found such a meaning of 'Semen immolare Moloch,' as made his disciple shrug his shoulders; that Mûnzer preached community of goods and wives; that Melancthon taught that the dogma of the Trinity deprives our mind of all liberty;\* that at a later period Ammon asserted that the resurrection of the dead could not be deduced from the New Testament;† Veter, that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses; that the history of the Jews to the time of the Judges is only a popular tradition; Bretschneider, that the Psalms can not be looked upon as inspired;‡ Augusti, that the true doctrine of Jesus Christ has not been preserved intact in the New Testament;§ and Geisse, that not one of the four gospels was written by the evangelist whose name it bears.||

"Since the days of Semler, Germany presents a singular spectacle; every ten years, or nearly so, its theological literature undergoes a complete revolution. What was admired during the one decennial period is rejected in the next, and the image which they adored is burnt to make way for new divinities; the dogmas which were held in honor fall into discredit; the classical treatise of morality is banished among the old books out of date; criticism overturns criticism; the commentary of yesterday ridicules that of the previous day, and what was clearly proved in 1840 is not less clearly disproved in 1850. The theological systems of Germany are as numerous as the political constitutions of France,—one revolution only awaits another."¶

---

\* Loci Theol., 1521. † Biblische Theologie, tom. iii, p. 367, (1841).

‡ Bretschneider, Handb. der Dogmatik, tom. i, p. 93.

§ Theolog. Monatschr. No. 9.

|| Geisse Paradoxa über hochevichtige Gegenstände des christenthums, 1829.

¶ Le Semeur, June, 1850.



## NOTES AND DOCUMENTS.

---

### NOTE A, PAGE 90.

WE here republish the condensed portraiture of the principal reformers drawn by themselves, as furnished by Bishop Trevern in his admirable work entitled, "An Amicable Discussion of the Church of England, and the Reformation in general;" Appendix, p. 52, seqq. Edition of Lucas, Baltimore.

---

### AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE OPINIONS THAT THE FIRST REFORMERS HAVE GIVEN OF ONE ANOTHER, AND OF THE EFFECTS OF THEIR PREACHING.

---

#### LUTHER.

He himself bears testimony that "while a Catholic, he passed his life in austerities, in watchings, in fasts and praying, in poverty, chastity, and obedience."\* When once reformed, that is to say, another man, he says that: "As it does not depend upon him not to be a man, so neither does it depend upon him to be without a woman; and that he can no longer forego the indulgence of the vilest natural propensities."†

1. "I burn with a thousand flames in my unsubdued flesh; I feel myself carried on with a rage towards women that approaches to madness. I, who ought to be fervent in spirit, am only fervent in impurity."‡

2. "To the best of my judgment, there is neither emperor, king, nor devil, to whom I would yield; no, I would not yield even to the whole world."§

3. "He was so well aware of his immorality, as we are informed by his favorite disciple, that he wished they would remove him from the office of preaching."||

4. "His timid companion acknowledges that he had received blows from him, *ab ipso colaphos accepi*."¶

5. "I tremble (wrote he to the same friend), when I think of the passions of Luther; they yield not in violence to the passions of Hercules."\*\*

6. "This man (said one of his contemporary reformers), is absolutely mad. He never ceases to combat truth against all justice, even against the cry of his own conscience."††

7. "He is puffed up with pride and arrogance, and seduced by Satan."‡‡

8. "Yes, the devil has made himself master of Luther, to such a degree, as to make one believe he wishes to gain entire possession of him."§§

---

\* Tom. v, In cap. I. ad Galat. v. 14.

† Ibid., Serm. de Matrim., fol. 119.

‡ Luth. Table Talk. § Idem. Resp. ad Maled. Reg. Ang. | Sleidan, Book ii, 1520.

¶ Melancthon, Letters to Theodore.

\*\* Ibid.

†† Hospinian.

‡‡ Ecclampadius.

§§ Zuinglius.

"I wonder no more, O Luther (wrote Henry VIII. to him), that thou art not, in good earnest, ashamed, and that thou darest to lift up thy eyes either before God or man, seeing that thou hast been so light and so inconstant as to allow thyself to be transported by the instigation of the devil to thy foolish concupiscences. Thou, a brother of the order of St. Augustine, hast been the first to abuse a consecrated nun; which sin would have been, in times past, so rigorously punished, that she would have been buried alive, and thou woulst have been scourged to death. But so far art thou from correcting thy fault, that moreover, shameful to say, thou hast taken her publicly to wife, having contracted with her an incestuous marriage and abused the poor and miserable.... to the great scandal of the world, the reproach and opprobrium of thy country, the contempt of holy matrimony, and the great dishonor and injury of the vows made to God. Finally, what is still more detestable, instead of being cast down and overwhelmed with grief and confusion, as thou oughtest to be, at thy incestuous marriage, O miserable wretch, thou makest a boast of it, and instead of asking forgiveness for thy unfortunate crime, thou dost incite all debauched religious, by thy letters and thy writings, to do the same."\*

"God, to punish that pride of Luther, which is discoverable in all his works (says one of the first Sacramentarians), withdrew his spirit from him, abandoning him to the spirit of error and of lying, which will always possess those who have followed his opinions, until they leave them."†

"Luther treats us as an execrable and condemned sect, but let him take care lest he condemn himself as an arch-heretic, from the sole fact, that he will not and can not associate himself with those who confess Christ. But how strangely does this fellow let himself be carried away by his devils! How disgusting is his language and how full are his words of the devil of hell! He says that the devil dwells now and for ever in the bodies of the Zuinglians; that blasphemies exhale from their insatanized, supersatanized, and persatanized breasts; that their tongues are nothing but lying tongues, moved at the will of Satan, infused, perfused, and transfused with his infernal poison! Did ever any one hear such language come out of an enraged demon?‡

"He wrote all his works by the impulse and the dictation of the devil, with whom he had dealing, and who in the struggle seemed to have thrown him by victorious arguments."§

"It is not an uncommon thing (said Zuinglius), to find Luther contradicting himself from one page to another....;|| and to see him in the midst of his followers, you would believe him to be possessed by a phalanx of devils."¶

Erasmus, the most learned man of his age, he who has been called the pride of Holland, the love and delight of Great Britain, and of almost every other nation,\*\* wrote to Luther himself: "All good people lament and groan over the fatal schism with which thou shakest the world by thy arrogant, unbridled, and seditious spirit."††

"Luther (says Erasmus again,) begins to be no longer pleasing to his disciples, so much so that they treat him as a heretic, and affirm, that being void of the spirit of the gospel, he is delivered over to the deliriums of a worldly spirit."‡‡

\* In Horim. p. 299.

† Conrad Reis. Upon the Lord's Supper, B. 2.

‡ The church of Zurich, against the Confession of Luther, p. 61.

§ Ibid.

|| T. II. Respons, ad Confess. Lutheri, fol. 44.

¶ Ibid., fol. 381.

\*\* Preface to the London Edition, year 1642.

†† Epistle to Luther, 1626.

‡‡ Epistle to Cardinal Sadolet, 1628.

"In very truth, Luther is extremely corrupt (said Calvin);\* would to God he had taken pains to put more restraint upon that intemperance which rages in every part of him! Would to God he had been attentive to discover his vices."†

Calvin says again, that, "Luther had done nothing to any purpose . . . . that people ought not to let themselves be duped by following his steps and being half-papist; that it is much better to build a church entirely afresh. . . ."‡ Sometimes, it is true, Calvin praised Luther so far as to call him "the restorer of Christianity."§ He protested, however, against their honoring him with the name of Elias. His disciples afterwards made the same protestations. "Those (said they), who put Luther in the rank of the prophets, and constitute his writings the rule of the church, have deserved exceedingly ill of the Church of Christ, and expose themselves and their churches to the ridicule and cutting reproaches of their adversaries."||

"Thy school (replied Calvin to Westphal the Lutheran), is nothing but a stinking pig-stye . . . .; dost thou hear me, thou dog? dost thou hear me, thou madman? dost thou hear me, thou huge beast?"

Karlostadius, while retired at Orlamunde, had so far ingratiated himself with the inhabitants, that they must needs stone Luther, who had run over to rate him for his false opinions respecting the Eucharist. Luther tells us this in his letter to the inhabitants of Strasburg: "These Christians attacked me with a shower of stones. This was their blessing: May a thousand devils take thee! Mayest thou break thy neck before thou returnest home again."¶

### KARLOSTADIUS.

You shall have his portrait as drawn by the temperate Melancthon. "He was (says he), a brutal fellow, without wit or learning, or any light of common sense; who, far from having any mark of the spirit of God, never either knew or practiced any of the duties of civilized life. The evident marks of impiety appeared in him. All his doctrine was either judaical or seditious. He condemned all laws made by Pagans. He would have men to judge according to the law of Moses, because he knew not the nature of Christian liberty. He embraced the fanatical doctrine of the Anabaptist immediately that Nicholas Storck began to spread it abroad . . . . One portion of Germany can bear testimony that I say nothing in this but what is true."

He was the first priest of the reform who married, and in the new fangled Mass that was made up for his marriage, his fanatical partisans went so far as to pronounce this man blessed, who bore *evident marks of impiety*. The collect of the Mass\*\* was thus worded: "Deus qui post logam et impiam sacerdotum tuorum coecitatem *Beatum* Andræam Karlostadium eâ gratiâ donâre dignatus es, ut primus, nullâ habitâ ratione papistici juris, uxorem ducere ausus fuerit; da, quæsumus, ut omnes sacerdotes, receptâ sanâ mente, ejus vestigia sequentes, ejectis concubinis aut eisdem ductis, ad legitimi consortium thori convertantur: per Dom. nost. etc."

The Lutherans inform us, that "it can not be denied that Karlostadius was strangled by the devil, considering the number of witnesses who relate it, the number of others who have committed it to writing, and even the

\* Cited by Conrad Schlussemburg.

† See Florimond. § Ibid., p. 887.

‡ Tom. ii, fol. 447, Sen. Germ.

† Theol. Cal. l. ii, fol. 126.

‡ In Admon, de lib. Concord., vi.

\*\* Quoted in Florimond.



letters of the pastors at Basle.\* He left behind him a son, Hans Karlostadius, who, renouncing the errors of his father, entered the communion of the Catholic Church."

### ZUINGLIUS.

"I do not refuse (wrote Melancthon),† to enter upon a conference (at Marburg) with Ecolampadius; for, to speak to Zuinglius is time lost.—It is not, however, a light undertaking, because their opinion is agreeable to many, who are desirous of touching the mysteries of God with their hand, and yet permit themselves to be conducted by their curiosity." Luther replying to the landgrave, said: "Of what use is this conference, if both parties bring to it an opinion already formed and come with the determination of yielding in nothing. I know for certain that they are in error. These are the stratagems of the devil; and this is the way that every thing goes worse and worse."

"I can not (says Zuinglius of himself) conceal the fire that burns me and drives me on to incontinence, since it is true that its effects have already drawn upon me but too many infamous reproaches among the churches."‡

The printer at Zurich, said Lavatherus, made a present to Luther of the translation of Zuinglius: but he sent it back with abusive language. "I will not read (said he) the works of these people, because they are out of the church; and are not only damned themselves, but draw many miserable creatures after them. As long as I live I shall make war upon them by my prayers and my writings."§

Karlostadius's opinion upon the Eucharist seemed to Luther to be foolish; that of Zuinglius fallacious and wicked, giving nothing but wind and smoke to Christians, instead of the true body of Jesus Christ, who spoke of neither sign nor figure.||

"The Zuinglians write that we look upon them as brethren; this is a fiction so foolish and impertinent (proclaimed the Lutherans in full synod) that we can not be sufficiently astonished at their impudence. We do not even grant to them a place in the church, far from recognizing as brethren, a set of people, whom we see agitated by the spirit of lying, and uttering blasphemies against the Son of Man."¶

Brentius, whom Bishop Jewel called the grave and learned old man, declares that "the dogmas of the Zuinglians are diabolical, full of impiety, of corruptions, and calumnies; that the error of Zuinglius upon the Eucharist drew along with it many others still more sacrilegious;"\*\* he predicted that the Zuinglians would soon show the heresy of the Nestorians springing up again in the church of God; "soon (says he), will the different articles of our religion disappear one after another, and to them will succeed the superstitions of the Pagans, the Talmudists, and the Mahometans."††

Luther openly declared that "Zuinglius was an offspring of hell, an associate of Arius, a man, who did not deserve to be prayed for . . ."

"Zuinglius, (said Luther) is dead and damned, having desired like a thief and a rebel, to compel others to follow his error."‡‡

\* Hist. de Coen. August. fol. 41.

† Quoted in Florimond.

‡ In Parenœs ad Helvet, t. i, d. 113.

§ Schlusseemb. lib. ii, Theol. Calvin, quoted in Florim., p. 96.

|| In Florim. p. 109.

¶ Epitome Colloq. Maul. Brunæ 1564, p. 82.

\*\* Brentius in Recognitione Prophetarum et Apost. in fine.

†† In Ballingeri Coronide, an. 1544.

‡‡ Tom. ii, fol. 36, cited in Florim.

"Many Protestants (testifies the Apologist of Zuinglius), have not scrupled to pronounce that he died in his sins, and thus to send him to hell."\*

"Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the Sacramentarians, nor stood in the way of the Zuinglians, nor sat in the chair of the Zurichians. You understand what I mean."†

### CALVIN.

Calvin, being obliged to leave France to disengage himself from law affairs, went to Germany and there sought out the greater part of those who were busy in disturbing the consciences and agitating the minds of men. At Basle he was presented by Bucer to Erasmus, who resorted to the private conferences without being induced to embrace the opinions of these innovators. Erasmus, after having conversed with him upon some of the points of religion, exceedingly astonished at what he had discovered in his dispositions, turned towards Bucer and showing young Calvin to him, said: "I see a great plague rising in the Church against the Church; video magnam pestem oriri in Ecclesia contra Ecclesiam."

"Calvin, I am aware, is violent and wayward: so much the better; he is the very man to advance our cause."‡ Thus spoke a German who had taught him at Bourges, and who, together with Greek and Hebrew, had crammed him with the new doctrines of Germany.

"Calvin, (said Bucer,) is a true mad dog. The man is wicked, and he judges of people according as he loves or hates them."

Baudoin, expressing his disapprobation of the opinions of Bucer and Melancthon, said that he admired their modesty, but that he could not endure Calvin, because he had found him too thirsty for vengeance and blood; *propter nimiam vindictæ et sanguinis sitim*.... Baudoin, induced by Cassandre, had renounced the doctrine of Calvin. He was the most learned and renowned lawyer of his time; he was born in the year 1520, and died in 1573. See his Funeral Oration on Papyrius Masson. Paris, 1638. See Bibl. Mazarine.

The intolerant and sanguinary spirit of this too celebrated man appears in one of his letters to his friend, the Marquis du Poet; "Do not find fault with our ridding the country of these fanatics, who exhort the people by their discourses to bear up against us, who blacken our conduct, and wish to make our faith be considered as an idle fancy. Such monsters ought to be suffocated, as happened at the execution of Michael Servetus, the Spaniard." The original of this letter has been preserved in the archives of the Marquis du Montelimart. We are assured that M. de Voltaire received in 1772 an authentic copy of it, according to his request, and that, after he had read it, he wrote on the margin some lines against Calvin.

"What man was ever more imperious and positive and more divinely infallible than Calvin, against whom the smallest opposition that men dared to make was always a work of Satan, and a crime deserving of fire."§

Calvin's erroneous opinions upon the Trinity excited against him the zeal of one, who in other respects held his Sacramentarian opinion; "What demon has urged thee, O Calvin! to declaim with the Arians against the Son of God?.... It is that Antichrist of the north that thou hast the impru-

\* Gualter in Apolog. Tom. i, oper. Zuingl. fol. 18.

† Luth. Epist. ad Jacob presbyt.

§ J. J. Rousseau, Lettres de la Montaigne.

‡ Wolmar.

dence to adore, that grammarian Melancthon."\* "Beware, Christian readers, above all, ye ministers of the word, beware of the books of Calvin. They contain an impious doctrine, the blasphemies of Arianism, as if the spirit of Michael Servetus had escaped from the executioner, and according to the system of Plato had transmigrated whole and entire into Calvin."† The same author gave as the title to his writings: "Upon the Trinity, and upon Jesus Christ our Redeemer, against Henry Sullinger, Peter Martyr, John Calvin, and the other ministers of Zurich and Geneva, disturbers of the Church of God."

By teaching that God was the author of sin, Calvin raised against him all parties of the reform. The Lutherans of Germany united to refute so horrible a blasphemy; "This opinion (said they), ought everywhere to be held in horror and execration; it is a stoical madness, fatal to morals, monstrous and blasphemous."‡

"This Calvinistic error is horribly injurious to God, and of all errors the most mischievous to mankind. According to this Calvinistic theologian, God would be the most unjust tyrant.—It would no longer be the devil, but God himself would be the Father of lies."§

The same author, who was superintendent and general inspector of the Lutheran churches in Germany, in the three volumes he published against the Calvinistic theology,|| never makes mention of the Calvinists without giving them the epithets of unbelievers, impious, blasphemous, impostors, heretics, incredulous, people struck with the spirit of blindness, barefaced and shameless men, turbulent ministers, busy agents of Satan, etc."

Heshusius, after exposing the doctrine of the Calvinists, indignantly declares, that "they not only transform God into a devil, the very idea of which is horrible: but that they annihilate the merits of Jesus Christ to such a degree that they deserve to be banished for ever to the bottom of hell."¶

The Calvinists themselves objected against this doctrine of their leader. Bullinger proves its erroneousness from Scripture, the Fathers, and the whole Church. "We do therefore (said he) prove clearly from Scripture this dogma taught everywhere since the Apostles' time, that God is not the author of evil, the cause of sin, but our corrupt inclinations or concupiscence, and the devil, who moves, excites, and inflames it."\*\* And Chatillon, whom Calvin had for a long time taken into his house and fed at his table, was one of the first to take up the pen against his benefactor and master, although he did it with all the deference due to this double title. "He is a false God (said he) that is so slow to mercy, so quick to wrath, who has created the greater part of men to destroy them, and has not only predestinated them to damnation, but even to the cause of their damnation. This God, then, must have determined from all eternity, and he now actually wishes and causes that we be necessitated to sin; so that thefts, adulteries, and murders are never committed but at his impulse; for he suggests to men perverse and shameful affections; he hardens them, not merely by simple permission, but actually and efficaciously; so that the wicked man accomplishes the work of God and not his own, and it is no longer Satan, but Calvin's God, who is really the father of lies."††

\* Stancharus de Mediot. in Calv. instit. No. 4.

† Id. ibid., No. 3.

‡ Corpus Doctrinæ Christianæ.

§ Conrad. Schlussemb. Calvin. Theolog. fol. 46

|| Francfort, 1592.

¶ Lib. de Præsent. Corp. Christ. 1560, in fine.

\*\* Decad. iii, Serm. x.

†† Castellio in lib. de Prædestin. ad Calvin.

Calvin in his turn forgets not to reproach Chatillon with his ingratitude, and adds: "Never did any man carry pride, perfidy, and inhumanity to a higher pitch. He who does not know thee to be an impostor, a buffoon, an impudent cynic, and one ever ready to rail at piety, is not fit to judge of any thing." Towards the end of his reply, he dismisses him with the following Genevan benediction: "May the God Satan quit thee: amen. Geneva, 1558."

About 1558, appeared in London, a work written, or at least approved, by the English bishops, against the Calvinistic sect of Puritans. Calvin and Beza are there described\* as intolerant and proud men, who by open rebellion against their prince, had founded their gospel, and pretended to rule the churches with a more odious tyranny, than that with which they had so often reproached the Sovereign Pontiffs. They protest in the presence of the Almighty God, that, "amongst all the texts of Scripture quoted by Calvin or his disciples, in favor of the church of Geneva against the church of England, there is not a single one, that is not turned to a sense unknown to the Church and to all the fathers, since the time of the apostles; so that were Augustine, Ambrose, Jerom, Chrysostom, etc., to return again to life and to see in what manner the Scripture had been cited by these Genevese doctors, they would be astonished that the world should ever have met with a man, so audacious and extravagant as to dare, without the least color of truth, to ill treat in such a way, the word of God, himself, his readers, and the whole world." And after declaring that from this Genevese source an impoisoned, seditious, and Catalinarian doctrine had been spread over England, they add: "Happy, a thousand times happy our island, if neither English nor Scot had ever put foot in Geneva, if they had never become acquainted with a single individual of these Genevese doctors!"

The partisans of Calvin have attempted, and for his credit I wish they had succeeded in their attempt, to rescue his memory from the crime and disgrace of having the mark of infamy branded on his shoulder. "What must pass as an indisputable proof of the crimes imputed to Calvin, is that, after the accusation had been prepared against him, the church of Geneva, not only did not show the contrary, but did not even contradict the information, which Berthelier, commissioned by the persons of the same town, gave at Noyon. This information was signed by the most respectable inhabitants of Noyon, and was drawn up with all the accustomed forms of the law. And in the same information we see that this heresiarch, having been convicted of an abominable sin, which was always punished by fire, the punishment that he had deserved was, at the intercession of his bishop, mitigated into that of the fleur-de-lis . . . . Add to this, that Bolesque, having given the same information, Berthelier, who was still living in the time of Bolesque, did not contradict it, as, undoubtedly, he would have done, had he been able to do so, without going against the conviction of his conscience, and opposing the public belief. Thus the silence both of the whole town interested in the affair and also of his secretary, is, on this occasion, an infallible proof of the disorders imputed to Calvin."† They were at that time so uncontested, that a Catholic writer, speaking of the scandalous life of Calvin, advances as a fact well known in England, that, "the leader of the Calvinists had been branded with the fleur-de-lis, and had fled from his native town; and that his antagonist Wittaker, acknowledging the fact,

\* A Survey of the pretended holy discipline, page 44, by Bishop Bancroft.

† Card. Richelieu, Traite, p. convert. liv. ii, pp. 319, 320.

merely replied by the following shameful comparison : Calvin has been stigmatized, so has St. Paul, so have others also."\* I find also that the grave and learned Doctor Stapleton,† who had every opportunity of gaining information on this subject, having spent his life in the neighborhood of Noyon, speaks of this adventure of Calvin's in the terms of one who was certain of the fact. "Inspiciuntur etiam adhuc hodie civitatis Noviodunensis in Picardiâ scrinia et rerum gestarum monumenta : in illis adhuc hodie legitur Joannem hunc Calvinum sodomice convictum, ex Episcopi et magistratûs indulgentia, solo stigmate in tergo notatum, urbe excessisse; nec ejus familiæ honestissimi viri, adhuc superstites, impetrare hactenus potuerunt, ut hujus facti memoria, quæ toti familiæ notam aliquam inurit, e civicis illis monumentis ac scriniis eraderetur."‡ Moreover, the Lutherans of Germany equally speak of it as of a fact : "De Calvini variis flagitiis et sodomiticis libidinibus, ob quas stigma Joannis Calvinii dorso impressum fuit a magistratu, sub quo vixit."§ "And as for the affected silence of Beza, it is replied, that the disciple having acquired notoriety by the same crimes and the same heresy as his master, he merits not the confidence of any one on this point."

It is very possible and most easy to dissemble like Beza and others after him; but, surely, it is hardly possible to fabricate at pleasure the account, that an eye-witness and that contemporaries have given us of the death of this man, an account which must excite compassion and terror in all who hear it. An eye-witness, who was then his disciple, gives the following information :|| "Calvinus in desperatione finiens vitam obiit turpissimo et foedissimo morbo, quem Deus rebellibus et maledictis comminatus est, prius excruciatum et consumptum. Quod ego verissime attestari audeo, qui funestum et tragicum illius exitum his meis oculis præsens aspexi."¶ The Lutherans of Germany testify, "Deum etiam in hoc sæculo judicium suum in Calvinum patefecisse, quem in virga furoris visitavit, atque horribiliter punivit, ante mortis infelicis horam. Deus enim manu sua potenti adeo hunc hæreticum percussit, ut, desperat⁹ salute, dæmonibus invocatis, jurans, execrans, et blasphemans misserrime, animam malignam, exhalaret; vermibus circa pudenda in aposthemate seu ulcere foetentissimo crescentibus, ita ut nullus assistentium foetorem amplius ferre posset."\*\*

On this subject I find an account too curious to be omitted here. "The dean told me that an old canon, a familiar friend of Calvin's, had formerly related to him the manner in which John Calvin died, and that he had learned it from a man called Petit Jean, who was Calvin's valet and who attended on him to his last expiring breath. This man after his master's death left Geneva, and went to reside again at Noyon. He related to this canon that Calvin on his death-bed made much lamentation, and that oftentimes he heard him cry out aloud and bitterly bewail his condition, and that one day he called him and said : 'Go to my study, and bring from such a part, The Office of our Lady according to the use at Noyon.' He went and brought it; and Calvin continued a long time praying to God from this office : he mentioned that the people of Geneva were unwilling to let many persons visit him in his illness, and said that he labored under many complaints,

\* Campian in the 3d reason, year 1581.

† Born in 1536. • He was nearly thirty years of age when Calvin died, in 1564.

‡ Promptuar Catholic. pars. 32, p. 133.

§ Conrad. Schlussemb. Calvin Theolog., lib. ii, fol. 72.

|| Joan Haren. Apud Pel. Cutzamium.

¶ See Dict. de Feller, art. Calvin.

\*\* Conrad. Schlussemb., in Theolog. Calvin, lib. ii, fol. 72. Francof. an. 1592.

such as imposthumes, the rash, the piles, the stone, the gravel, the gout, consumption, shortness of breath, and spitting of blood; and that he was struck by God, as those of whom the Prophet speaks, *Tetigit eos in posteriora, opprobrium sempiternum dedit eis.*"\*

This recital agrees with that of Bolsec, who also cites the testimony of those who attended upon Calvin in his last illness. For after having spoken of the complaints mentioned by Beza, and of the lousy disease, about which Beza says nothing, he adds: "Those who attended upon him to his last breath have testified it. Let Beza, or whoever pleases deny it: it is, however, clearly proved, that he cursed the hour in which he had ever studied and written: while from his ulcers and his whole body proceeded an abominable stench, which rendered him a nuisance to himself and to his domestics, who add moreover, that this was the reason why he would have no one go and see him." (*Life of Calvin, Lyons, 1577, transl. from the Latin.*)

### THEODORE BEZA.

Let us now pass on to Calvin's celebrated biographer. The Lutherans shall teach us in what esteem and value we are to hold him: "Who will not be astonished (says Heshusius) at the incredible impudence of this monster, whose filthy and scandalous life is known throughout France, by his more than cynical epigrams. And yet you would say, to hear him speak, that he is some holy personage, another Job, or an anchorite of the desert, nay greater than St. Paul or St. John; so much does he everywhere proclaim his exile, his labors, his purity, and the admirable sanctity of his life."†

If we wish to refer the matter to one holding an elevated situation among the Lutherans: "Beza (says he to us) draws to the life, in his writings, the image of those ignorant and gross persons, who for want of reason and argument, have recourse to abuse, or of those heretics, whose last resource is insult and abuse.... and thus, like an incarnate demon, this obscene wretch, this perfect compound of artifice and impiety vomits forth his satirical blasphemies."‡ The same Lutheran testifies that "after having spent twenty-three years of his life in reading more than two hundred and twenty Calvinistic productions, he had not met with one, in which abuse and blasphemy were so accumulated as in the writings of this wild beast. And if any one doubt of it, adds he, let him run over his famous Dialogues against Dr. Heshusius. No one would ever imagine they were written by a man, but by Beelzebub himself in person; I should be horror-struck to repeat the obscene blasphemies, which this impure atheist puts forth on the gravest subjects with a disgusting mixture of impiety and buffoonery; undoubtedly, he had dipped his pen in some infernal ink."

\* *Remarques sur la Vie de J. Calvin*, taken from the records of the chapter at Noyon, the personal examination that took place in 1614; by James Desmay, doctor of Sorbonne, vic. gen. of Rouen. This little work, dedicated to Lord Kay, earl of Ancaster, 1621, is to be found in the *Bibliothèque du Roi*.

It is the part of candor to signify that I have not seen a word about the famous fleur-de-lis in the work of Desmay, although he carefully made his inquiries in these places. I should be glad if that silence carried sufficient weight with it to destroy the very positive and public assertions of authors who wrote more than forty or fifty years before him. It appears that Desmay only examined the records of the chapter and not those of the town. Moreover, it was then eighty years after the sentence had been passed upon Calvin, and we are assured that his friends had succeeded in removing it from the records of the town.

† *Traduct. de Florim. p. 1048.*

‡ Schlussemberg, in *Theolog. Calvin, lib. ii, passim.*



"Beza, who was a Frenchman, (says Florimond,)\* and the great buttress of Calvin's opinions, attacked Luther's version as impious, novel, and unheard of." "Truly, (retorted the Lutherans,) it well becomes a French merry-andrew, who understands not a word of our language, to teach the Germans to speak German.

### MELANCTHON.

Let us confine ourselves to the judgment passed upon him by those of his communion. The Lutherans declared in full synod: "That he had so often changed his opinions upon the supremacy of the Pope, upon justification by faith alone, upon the Lord's Supper and free-will, that all this his wavering inconstancy had staggered the weak in these fundamental questions, and prevented a great number from embracing the confession of Augsburg: that by changing and rechanging his writings he had given too much reason to the *Episcopalians* to set off his variations, and to the faithful to know no longer what doctrine to consider as true."† They add: "that this famous work upon the theological common places would much more appropriately be called a Treatise upon Theological witticisms."

Schlussemberg goes so far as to declare: "that being struck from above by a spirit of blindness and dizziness, Melancthon afterwards did nothing but fall from one error into another, till at last he himself knew not what to believe."‡ He says moreover, that: "Melancthon had evidently impugned the divine truth, to his own shame and the perpetual disgrace of his name."§

### ÆCOLAMPADIUS.

The Lutherans wrote in the Apology for their Lord's Supper, that Æcolampadius, a fautor of the Sacramentarian opinion, speaking one day to the landgrave, said: "I would rather have my hand cut off than that it should ever write any thing against Luther's opinion respecting the Lord's Supper."||

When this was told to Luther, by one who had heard it, the hatred of the patriarch of the reform seemed immediately softened down. On learning the death of Æcolampadius, he exclaimed: "Ah! miserable and unfortunate Æcolampadius, thou was the prophet of thy own misery, when thou didst appeal to God to exercise his vengeance on thee, if thou taughtest a false doctrine. May God forgive thee; if thou art in such a state that he can forgive thee."

While the inhabitants of Basle were placing the following epitaph on his tomb in the cathedral: "John Æcolampadius, Theologian . . . first preacher of evangelical doctrine in this town and true bishop of the temple;" Luther was positive and sure, and afterwards wrote on his side, that "the devil, whom Æcolampadius employed, strangled him during the night in his bed. This is the excellent master (continues he) who taught him that there are contradictions in Scripture. See to what Satan brings learned men."¶

\* Florimond, p. 96.

† Theol. Calvin, lib. ii, p. 91.

‡ De Miss. priv.

† Colloq. Altenb., fol. 502, 503, year 1568.

§ Ibid. p. 92.

| See Florim., p. 175.

## OCHIN.

This religious man, superior of the Capuchins, leaving Italy and his order, where he had acquired a great reputation for the austerity of his life and his distinguished talent in preaching, repaired to Peter Martyr in Switzerland, where, after striking acquaintance with the Sacramentarians, he went a step further and preached up Arianism. "He is become (wrote Beza to Diducius) a wicked lecher, a fautor of the Arians, a mocker of Christ and his Church."\*

'Tis true that Ochin had, on his part, been equally severe upon the religionists of Geneva and Zurich; for in his dialogue against the sect of terrestrial Gods, he thus expressed himself in their regard.... "These people are desirous that we should hold as an article of faith whatever comes from their brain. He who does not choose to follow them is a heretic. What they dream of in the night (an allusion to Zuinglius) is committed to writing, is printed and held as an oracle. Do not think that they will ever change. So far are they from being disposed to obey the church, that on the contrary the church must obey them. Is not this being popes? Is it not being gods upon earth? Is it not tyrannizing over the consciences of men?"

---

Such were the principal authors of the religious and political excitements that desolated the Church and the world in the sixteenth century. They were perfectly acquainted with each other; they had seen one another, had conferred together in different conferences; they labored with emulation, if not with unanimity, at the work, which they called reform. It is impossible at the present day to form respecting their doctrine, their characters and persons, more correct notions than those which they themselves entertained respecting them, and which they have transmitted to us. It would therefore be unreasonable in us not to refer to the reciprocal testimonies they have borne to one another. Neither is it less true, that if we go by their own judgments, we can not but consider them as odious beings and unworthy ministers, whether they have mutually done justice to one another or have calumniated one another. In a word, the only point upon which they agree is to blacken and condemn one another, and it is but too certain that this point, in which they were all agreed, is also the only one upon which they were all right.

You then who have just heard them revealing to the world their own turpitude, will you continue any longer to take them as your guides, your masters, your fathers in faith? Hitherto you have only been taught to look upon them as extraordinary beings, endowed with sanctity, virtue, and all the gifts of heaven; and with this persuasion, you felt proud to call yourselves their disciples and children. You now see your mistake; you see what they were; they have told it you themselves. Believe them upon this point, and it is enough to make you abandon them on all others, and to abjure, since you can do it, a descent that must from henceforth be so disgraceful and ignominious in your eyes.

What could religion expect from such men? What profit could the world receive from their preaching? What actually were the effects produced? Here also they shall be our instructors. "The world grows worse and becomes more wicked every day. Men are now more given to revenge,

---

\* Florimond, p. 296.



more avaricious, more devoid of mercy, less modest and more incorrigible ; in fine more wicked than in the Papacy."\*

"One thing, no less astonishing than scandalous, is to see that, since the pure doctrine of the gospel has been brought again to light, the world daily goes from bad to worse."†

The noblemen and the peasants are come to such a pitch, that they boast and proclaim, without scruple, that they have only to let themselves be preached at, that they would prefer being entirely disenthralled from the word of God ; and that they would not give a farthing for all our sermons together. And how are we to lay this to them as a crime, when they make no account of the world to come ? They live as they believe : they are and continue to be swine : they live like swine and they die like real swine."‡

Calvin, after declaiming against atheism, which was prevailing above all in the palaces of princes, and in the courts of justice, and the first ranks of his communion. "There remains still (adds he) a wound more deplorable. The pastors, yes, the pastors themselves who mount the pulpit . . . are at the present time the most shameful examples of waywardness and other vices. Hence their sermons obtain neither more credit nor authority than the fictitious tales uttered on the stage by the strolling player. And these persons are yet bold enough to complain that we despise them and point at them for scorn. As for me, I am more inclined to be astonished at the patience of the people : I am astonished that the women and children do not cover them with mud and filth."§

"Those whom I had known to be pure, full of candor and simplicity, (says one whom no one suspects,) these have I seen afterwards, when gone over to the sect (of the Evangelicals) begin to speak of girls, flock to games of hazard, throw aside prayer, give themselves up entirely to their interests, become the most impatient, vindictive, and frivolous ; changed in fact from men to vipers. I know well what I say."||

"I see many Lutherans, but few Evangelicals. Look a little at these people, and consider whether luxury, avarice, and lewdness do not prevail still more amongst them than amongst those whom they detest. Show me any one, who by means of his gospel is become better. I will show you very many that have become worse. Perhaps it has been my bad fortune ; but I have seen none but who are become worse by their gospel."¶

"Luther was wont to say that after the revelation of his gospel, virtue had become extinct, justice oppressed, temperance bound with cords, virtue torn in pieces by the dogs, faith had become wavering, and devotion lost."\*\*

It was at that time a saying in Germany, expressive of their going to spend a jovial day in debauch : "*Hodie Lutheranice vivemus* : We will spend to-day like Lutherans."††

"And if the Sovereigns do not evangelize and interpose their authority to appease all these disputes, no doubt the Churches of Christ will soon be infested with heresies, which will ultimately bring on their ruin . . . By these multiplied paradoxes the foundations of our religion are shaken, heresies crowd into the Churches of Christ, and the way is thrown open to atheism."‡‡

\* Luther in *Postilla* sup. i, dom. advent. † Id. in *Serm. Conviv.* German. fol. 55.

‡ Id. on the 1st Ep. to the Corinthians, xv. § Liv. sur les scandales, p. 128.

|| Erasm. *Epist.* to the brethren of Lower Germany. ¶ Id. *Ep.* a. an. 1528.

\*\* Aurifaber, fol. 628, v. Florim. p. 225.

†† Bened. Morgenstern, *Traité de l'Eglise*, p. 221.

‡‡ Sturm, *Ratio ineundæ concord.* p. 2, an. 1579.

“Did any age ever witness persons of each sex and of every age give up themselves, as ours do, to intemperance and the fire of their passions? . . . . (said one of the first witnesses of the reform). Men now receive as a divine oracle that saying of Luther’s that it is no more possible for a person to restrain his desires than his saliva, nor more easy for man and woman to dispense with one another than for them to go without eating and drinking. Impossible, do you hear it sung on all sides, and in all tones, impossible not to sacrifice to Venus, when the time of life arrives.”\*

“Do we not see at the present day (cries out another witness) youth even giving into debauch, and if they are withdrawn from it, loudly demanding to be married. The young women also, whether already fallen, or only as yet lascivious, are perpetually throwing in your face that impudent sentence of Luther’s, that continence is impossible, seeing that Venus is not less necessary than eating; according to the new fashion, children marry and from them no doubt are to spring the valiant champions who are to drive the Turk beyond the Caucasus.”†

“We are come to such a pitch of barbarity that many are persuaded that if they fasted one single day, they would find themselves dead the night following.”‡

“It is certain that God wishes and requires of his servants a grave and Christian discipline; but it passes with us as a new papacy and a new monkery.§ We have lately learned (say the religionists of our times), that we are saved by faith alone in Jesus Christ, without any other help than his merits and the grace of God.” “And, that the world may know they are not papists and that they have no confidence in good works, they perform none. Instead of fasting, they eat and drink day and night, they change prayers into swearing; and this is what they call the re-established gospel, or the reformation of the gospel, said Smidelin.”

“We are not to be astonished that in Poland, Transylvania, Hungary and other countries, many pass over to Arianism and some to Mahomet; the doctrine of Calvin leads to these impieties.”||

“Certainly, to speak the truth, there is much more conscientiousness and uprightness among the greatest part of papists than among many Protestants. And if we examine past ages, we shall find more sanctity, devotion, zeal, although blind, more charity and fidelity to one another, than is seen at present among us.”¶

“Let them (the Protestants) I say, look with the eye of charity upon them (the Catholics) as well as severity, and they shall finde some excellent orders of government, some singular helps for increase of godlinesse and devotion, for the conquering of sinne, for the profiting of virtue; contrarie-wise, in themselves, looking with a lesse indulgent eye than they doe, they shall finde, there is no such absolute perfection in their doctrine and reformation.”\*\*

This is enough, without adding to these testimonies, those of Capito, Bucer, and Melancthon, who may find place in the following letter, and

\* Sylv. Czecanovius de corrupt. morib. † Wigandus, de bonis et malis German.

‡ Melancth. on the sixth chapter of St. Matthew.

§ Jacob Andræus. on St. Luke, ch. xxi, 1583.

¶ Id. Preface contre l’Apol. de Dancæus.

¶ Stubb’s motive to good works, p. 43, an. 1596.

\*\* A Relation of the state of Religion and with what Hopes and Policies it hath been framed and is maintained in the several states of the Western parts of the world. Sec. 48. By Sir Edwin Sanders, Printed London, 1605.

without transcribing here upon England what is told us by Strype, Camden, Dugdale, and even by Henry VIII. in a declaration to his parliament.\*

Such then were the first fruits of the Reformation! and such we learn them to have been from its authors themselves, from its promoters and its first witnesses.† Their confessions, their lamentations, wrung from them by the extent and notoriety of the scandal, will eternally proclaim to the world, that with the reform were propagated vices and disorders; that in the countries where it was adopted, and in proportion as it gained ground, devotions was seen to be weakened, piety extinguished, morals deteriorated, faith gradually lost in the multitude, and even among the ministers themselves; so much so that to this day, in the cradle and center of Calvinism, at Geneva, where they abound, you will scarcely find four or five, (I know it for certain,) who will consent to preach the divinity of our Saviour and teach it in their catechetical instructions. And yet there have been persons bold enough to hold out the progress of such a reform as a proof of the divine protection: as if we could acknowledge as its apostles such men as they have reciprocally described themselves to be: as if it could take parts in disorders, smile upon the propagation of vice, and favor the decaying of faith and Christianity.

---

#### NOTE B, PAGE 90.

##### LUTHER'S CONFERENCE WITH THE DEVIL.

✂ In Turnbull's complete translation of Audin's Life of Luther, this entire conference is given in the Appendix in the original Latin. We here republish the substantially correct translation of the American edition.

"I ONCE suddenly awoke about midnight: Satan began to dispute with me. 'Listen to me, learned doctor,' says he. 'During fifteen years you have daily celebrated private Masses. What if all those Masses have been

---

\* See Letters of Atticus, pp. 64, 65; 3d edition, London, 1811.

† I beg the reader to make also the following remarks: It is a fact that, before the Reformation, infidels were scarcely known in the world: it is a fact that they are come forth in swarms from its bosom. It was from the writings of Herbert, Hobbes, Blount, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, and Boyle, that Voltaire and his party drew the objections and errors, which they have brought so generally in fashion in the world. According to Diderot and d'Alembert, the first step that the untractable Catholic takes is to adopt the Protestant principle of private judgment. He establishes himself judge of his religion, leaves it and joins the reform. Dissatisfied with the incoherent doctrines he then discovers, he passes on to the Socinians, whose consequences soon drive him into Deism: still pursued by unexpected difficulties, he throws himself into universal doubt, where still experiencing uneasiness, he at last resolves to take the last step, and proceeds to terminate the long chain of his errors in Atheism. Let us not forget that the first link of this fatal chain is attached to the fundamental maxim of private judgment. It is therefore historically correct, that the same principle that created Protestantism three centuries ago, has never ceased since that time to spin it out into a thousand different sects, and has concluded by covering Europe with that multitude of free thinkers, who place it on the verge of ruin.

When sects beget infidelity and by infidelity revolutions, it is plain that the political safety of the states will only be secured by a return to religious unity.

a horrible idolatry? What, if the body and blood of Jesus Christ be not present there, and that yourself adored, and made others adore, bread and wine? I answered him, I have been made priest; I have received ordination at the bishop's hands; and I have acted according to the command of my superiors, and through the obedience I owe them. Why could not I consecrate, since I have seriously pronounced the words of Jesus Christ, and have celebrated Mass with great devotion, as you know? 'All that is true,' answered Satan, 'but even the Turks and Pagans perform all their sacred functions through obedience, and religiously observe all their ceremonies. The priests of Jeroboam, also, zealously opposed the true priests, who were at Jerusalem. What, if your ordination and consecration were as invalid, as that of the Turkish and Samaritan priests is false, and their worships impious?'

"'You know, in the first place,' says he, 'that you had then neither knowledge of Jesus Christ, nor the true faith. In what regards faith, you were no better than a Turk, for the Turks and all the devils believe the history of Jesus Christ; that he was born, was crucified, and died, etc. But the Turk and we, reprobate spirits, have no confidence in his mercy, and we do not regard him as our Saviour and mediator; but we fear him as a severe judge. Such was your faith; you had none other, when you received the unction of the bishop; and all those who gave or received it, had similar sentiments of Jesus Christ. This is the reason that you withdraw from Jesus Christ as a severe judge, and have recourse to the Virgin Mary and the Saints, and look on them as mediators between you and Jesus Christ. No papist can deny that this is the reason why Jesus Christ has been deprived of his glory. You have, then, been ordained; you have been tonsured; you have offered the Mass as Pagans and not as Christians. How, then, could you consecrate at Mass, or really celebrate it, since you had not the power of consecrating, which, according to your own doctrine, is an essential defect?'

"'In the next place, you have been consecrated priest, and you have celebrated Mass contrary to its institution, and to the design of Jesus Christ in instituting it. He wished the sacrament to be distributed among the faithful, who should communicate, and to be given to the Church to be eaten and drunk. In truth, the priest is established minister of the Church, to preach the word of God, and to dispense the sacraments, according to the words of Christ at the Last Supper, and those of St. Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians, while speaking of the Lord's Supper. Hence, the ancients called it "communion," because, according to the doctrine of Jesus Christ, the priest ought not alone receive the sacrament, but his Christian brethren should receive it with him. And you, for fifteen years, have always applied to yourself the sacrament, when you celebrated Mass, and have not communicated it to others. Nay, it was prohibited to give them the whole sacrament. What a priesthood is that? What a consecration? What a Mass? What sort of a priest are you, who have not been ordained for the Church, but for yourself? It is certain that Jesus Christ has not known, and does not acknowledge, such a sacrament and such an ordination.

"'In the third place, the thought and design of Jesus Christ, as his words demonstrate, is, that, in receiving the sacrament, we should announce and commemorate his death. "Do this," says he, "in commemoration of me;" and, as St. Paul says, "until he comes." But you, who say private Masses, have not even once preached and confessed Jesus Christ in all your Masses. You have only taken the sacrament, and muttered, between your teeth, the

words of the institution for yourself alone. Was that the institution of Jesus Christ? Is it by such actions that you prove that you are a priest of Jesus Christ? Is that to act like a Christian priest; and have you been ordained for that?

“In the fourth place, it is clear that the thought, the design, and the institution of Jesus Christ were, that the rest of the faithful should communicate as well as the priest; whereas, you have been ordained, not to dispense to them this sacrament, but to sacrifice. And, contrary to the institution of Jesus Christ, you have made use of the Mass, as of a sacrifice, for that is the obvious signification of the words of the bishop who ordained you. According to the ceremony of ordination, when he puts the chalice into the hands of him who has received the sacred unction, he says to him, “receive the power of celebrating and sacrificing for the living and for the dead.” What is this perverse unction and ordination? Jesus Christ has instituted the Supper to be the food and nourishment for all the Church; to be presented by the priest to all those who communicate with him; and you make of it a propitiatory sacrifice before God! O abomination which surpasses all other abominations!

“In the fifth place, the design of Jesus Christ is, as has been said, that the sacrament should be distributed to the Church, that is, to the communicants, to exercise and strengthen their faith, in the various assaults they suffer, as, also, to renew the memory of the benefits of Jesus Christ; whereas, you regard it as a thing belonging to you; and which you can celebrate without others, and which you can give to them gratuitously or for lucre. Tell me, can you deny that? Have you not been made priest in that manner, that is, without faith? For you have received ordination contrary to the design and institution of Jesus Christ—not that you might give the sacrament to others, but that you might sacrifice it for the living and the dead. You have not been ordained to be the minister of the Church. Moreover, you have never distributed the sacrament to others; you have not preached Jesus Christ at Mass; and consequently you have done nothing that Jesus Christ instituted. Have you then received ordination against Jesus Christ and his institution, to do every thing against him? And if you have been consecrated and ordained by the bishops, contrary to Jesus Christ, your ordination is unquestionably impious, false, and antichristian. I maintain, then, that you have not consecrated at Mass, and that you have offered, and made others adore, simple bread and wine.

“You see, then, that there is wanting in your Mass, first, a person who can consecrate, that is a Christian; there is wanting also a person for whom you should consecrate, and to whom the sacrament is to be given; that is to say, the Church, the body of the faithful.

“You stand there by yourself, and you imagine that Jesus Christ instituted for you alone, the sacrament, and that you need but speak, to consecrate in the Mass the body and blood of Jesus Christ, although you are not a member of Jesus Christ, but his enemy. There is wanting, in the third place, the end, the design, the fruit, and object for which Jesus Christ instituted this sacrament. For Jesus Christ instituted it, to be eaten and to be drunk, to fortify the faith of his members, to preach and announce in the Mass, the benefits of Jesus Christ. Now the rest of the Church do not even know that you say Mass; they learn nothing from you, and receive nothing from you; but you alone silently eat by yourself and drink by yourself; and being an ignorant and faithless monk, you do not communicate with any one; and according to the custom which prevails among you,

you sell for money what you perform, as if it were worth any thing. If then, you are not capable of consecrating, and ought not attempt it: if there be no person at Mass to receive the sacrament; if you alter and destroy the institution of Jesus Christ;—in fine, if you have been ordained merely for the purpose of doing every thing contrary to the institution of Jesus Christ,—what use is there in your ordination, and what do you do, while saying Mass and consecrating, but blaspheme and tempt God? You are not a real priest, nor do you really consecrate the body of Jesus Christ.

“I will draw a comparison for you. If any one baptizes, when there is no person to be baptized, as if some bishop, according to the ridiculous custom of the papists, baptize a bell, which neither ought, nor can be baptized, tell me, is that a real baptism? You must answer in the negative. For who can baptize that which does not exist, or can not receive baptism? What baptism would it be, were I to pronounce in the air these words: “I baptize thee, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;” and that I poured out water at the same time? What would, in that case, receive the remission of sin, or the Holy Ghost? Would it be the air or the bell; it is obvious that there is no baptism there, although the words of baptism are pronounced, and the waters poured out; because there is no person to receive baptism. The same thing occurs in your Mass, when you pronounce the words, and think that you receive the sacrament, whereas, you only receive bread and wine. For the Church, who is the person authorized to receive, is not there; and you, who are an impious and incredulous man, are no more capable of receiving the sacrament, than the bell is capable of receiving baptism. Hence you possess nothing of the sacrament. You will, perhaps, tell me:—although I do not present the sacrament to the others that are in the Church, I nevertheless take it and receive it myself: and there are many among the rest of the faithful, who, although infidels, receive the sacrament, or baptism, and yet receive a true sacrament and a true baptism. Why, then, should there not be a true sacrament in the Mass? But it is not the same thing; because in baptism, even when administered in urgent cases, there are at least two persons, he who baptizes, and he who is baptized; and frequently many members of the Church. Moreover, the function of him who baptizes is such, that it imparts something to the other members of the Church; and he deprives them of nothing to apply it to himself alone, as you do in the Mass. And all the other things done in baptism are according to the institution of Jesus Christ, but the Mass is against the institution of Jesus Christ.

“In the second place, why don't you teach that you can baptize yourself? Why disapprove of such a baptism? Why reject confirmation, if any one would confirm himself, as confirmation is among you? Why would the ordination be invalid, if any one were to ordain himself priest? Why would there be no extreme unction, if any one, in danger of death, would anoint himself, as the Catholics do? Why would there be no marriage, if any one would marry himself, or offer violence, and say that this action would be marriage—for these are your seven sacraments? If then, no one can administer any of your sacraments himself, why do you wish to reserve this sacrament for yourself alone? It is true, that Jesus Christ received himself in this sacrament, and every minister, when he distributes it to others, receives it also himself. But he does not consecrate for himself alone. He takes it conjointly with others, and with the Church; and all this is done conformably to the command of Jesus Christ. When I speak of consecration, I ask if any one can consecrate the sacrament for himself



only;—because I know well that after the consecration, every priest can receive, as well as others; for the communion and the table of the Lord is common to many. When I asked if any one could call and ordain himself, I knew well that after having been called and ordained he might follow his vocation.'

"In this perilous contest with the devil, I attempted to repel the enemy with the arms to which I was accustomed under the Papacy. I objected to him the faith and intention of the Church, by representing to him, that it was in the faith and intention of the Church, that I had celebrated these Masses. It may be, said I, that I did not believe as I sought to have believed, and that I was deceived; but the Church, however, believed in the manner required, and was not deceived. But Satan, urging one with more force and vehemence than before, said: 'Show me where it is written, that an impious and incredulous man can ascend the altar of Jesus Christ—consecrate and make the sacrament through the faith of the Church:—where has God ordained so; where is it commanded? How can you prove that the Church communicates to you her intention, to say your private Mass, unless you have the word of God for you, and if it be not merely men who have taught you without this word? All this doctrine is false. What audacity you have! You act in the dark; you abuse the name of the Church; and afterwards you wish to defend all your abominations under the pretext of the intention of the Church. You can only bring forward the intention of the Church. The Church sees nothing and intends nothing beyond the word of Jesus Christ, and still less against his design and institution, of which I have spoken; for St. Paul says, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chap. ii, speaking of the Church and of the assembly of the faithful: "We have the mind of Christ."

"'But how will you learn that a thing is conformable to the intention and design of Jesus Christ and the Church, unless by the word of Jesus Christ, by the doctrine and public profession of the Church? How do you know that the intention and thought of the Church is, that homicide, adultery, and unbelief are among the sins, for which you are liable to be damned? And how do you know other things of the same kind, unless by the word of God?

"'If, then, you are to learn from the word and commands of God, what the Church thinks of good or bad actions, ought you not much more learn from the word of God, what she thinks of its doctrine? Why, then, you blasphemer, do you disregard the clear words and the order of Jesus Christ in your private Mass? And why do you make use of his name, and of the intention of the Church, to cloak your falsehood and impiety? You deck out your own invention with this miserable coloring; as if the intention of the Church could be contrary to the words of Jesus Christ! What prodigious boldness, to profane the name of the Church by so unblushing a falsehood!

"'Since, then, the bishop has made you capable of celebrating Mass, by the unction he gave you, with the sole object, that by saying private Masses, you might do all that was opposed to the clear words and institution of Jesus Christ,—to the feelings, the faith, and public profession, of the Church, this unction is profane, and has nothing in it holy or sacred. It is even still more vain, more useless and absurd than the baptism of bells.' And Satan, urging still more closely this argument, said: 'you are not then ordained; you have only offered bread and wine, like the Pagans, by a traffic, infamous in itself and injurious to God, you have sold your ministry to Christians,

and served, not God, but your own cupidity. What an unheard of abomination !” This is almost the summary of the dispute.

“I behold now the holy fathers, who laugh at me and exclaim : Is this the celebrated doctor, who is nonplussed and can not answer Satan ? Do you not know, doctor, that the devil is a lying spirit ? Thank you, fathers. I would not have known until now, learned theologians, that the devil was a liar, unless you had said so. In truth, if you were obliged to suffer the assaults of Satan, and to dispute with him, you would never speak as you do, of the practice and traditions of the Church. The devil is a severe antagonist ; and he presses one so closely, that it is impossible to resist him without a particular grace of the Lord. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, he fills the soul with darkness and with fear ; and unless he has to do with a man who is master of the Scripture, he easily overcomes him. It is true, he is a liar ; but he does not speak untruths when he accuses us : for then he comes to the combat with the double testimony of the law of God, and our own conscience. I do not deny that I have sinned. I do not deny that my sin is great. I do not deny that I am liable to death and damnation !”\*

Audin adds :

“Such is the narrative of this scene, in which Luther appears to much less advantage than at Worms. The devil shows himself in it to be a still worse logician than the Dominican at Leipsic—where, however, Satan, if we may credit Luther, spoke by his mouth. Here the master does not equal the disciple. Unless the reformer suppressed those overwhelming arguments by which the devil prostrated him, there is no tyro in theology who would not have refuted the satanic thesis. Luther had doubtless at hand some of those catechisms, which are yet to be found in every German family. He could have confounded his adversary, had he opened the page in which the Church teaches,—that the priest, in celebrating the sacrifice of the Mass, applies the merits of it to all who hear it devoutly. And, then, Satan was as ignorant of history as he was of the catechism. We know not what answer he would have given to Luther, had the reformer inquired, where he had read that the Turks believed in the death of Jesus Christ ; whereas Mahomet, in the Koran, positively says, that God took up Jesus Christ, and that another was crucified in his place. Luther also was too soft with his adversary.”

---

\* *De Missa angulari*, t. vi, Jenæ, p. 81, 82.—T. vii, Op. Luth. Wett. fol. 228. See *Conference du diable avec Luther contre le saint sacrement de la Messe* (par Paul Bruzeau) Paris, 1740.—Cochl. in act. fol. 67, Math. conc. f. 32. Claude, *Defense de la Reformation*, 2me partie ch. v. *Prejugés legitimes* par Nicole. Bruxelles, ch. ii. *Refutation de la reponse d'un ministre Lutherien sur la conference du diable avec Luther*. Bruxelles, 1682. Basnage *Hist. des eglises reformées*, t. iii ch. v. Bayle, *Art. Luther*.



## NOTE C, PAGE 149.

PERMISSION GRANTED TO PHILIP, LANDGRAVE OF HESSE,  
BY LUTHER AND OTHER REFORMERS, TO HAVE TWO  
WIVES AT ONCE.

To show that there is not a shadow of doubt existing in regard to the truth of this disgraceful proceeding, we here append the documents themselves; two of them entire in Latin and English, and the other as abridged by Bossuet, who, however, furnishes the Latin text of it in full. (History of the Variations, of the Protestant Churches, vol. i, book vi, p. 179, seqq., and p. 205, seqq.) These documents were first published in 1679, by order of the Elector Charles Lewis, Count Palatine; and the book containing them was written probably with a view to justify Luther against Bellarmine; with what success the reader of these papers may best judge. After having been carefully concealed for more than a century, this whole scandalous transaction was laid bare by Protestants themselves, professing to be the friends of Luther and of his Reformation.

## I.—DOCUMENT ABRIDGED BY BOSSUET.

1.—Bucer sent to Luther and other heads of the Party to obtain leave for marrying a second wife—this Prince's instruction to his Envoy.

The landgrave of Hesse begins by setting forth how that, "since his last illness, he had reflected much on his state, and chiefly upon this, that a few weeks after his marriage he had begun to wallow in adultery: that his pastors had frequently exhorted him to approach the holy table, but he did believe he should there meet with his judgment, because he will not abandon such a course of life."\* He imputes to his wife the cause of all his disorders, and gives the reasons for his never loving her; but, having a difficulty in explaining himself on these matters, he refers them to Bucer, whom he had made privy to the whole affair. Next he speaks of his complexion, and the effects of high living at the assemblies of the empire, at which he was obliged to be present. To carry thither a wife of such a quality as his own, would be too great an encumbrance. When his preachers remonstrated to him that he ought to punish adulteries and such like crimes, "How," said he, "can I punish crimes of which I myself am guilty? When I expose myself in war for the gospel cause, I think I should go to the devil should I be killed there by the sword or musket-ball.† I am sensible that, with the wife I have, NEITHER CAN I, NEITHER WILL I, change my life, whereof I take God to witness; so that I find no means of amendment but by the remedies God afforded the people of old, that is to say polygamy."‡

\* Inst., N. 1, 2, lb. n. 3.

† Ibid., N. 5.

‡ Ibid., N. 6.

2.—Sequel to the instruction—the landgrave promises the revenues of monasteries to Luther if he will favor his design.

He there states the reasons which persuade him that it is not forbidden under the gospel; and what deserves most notice, is his saying, “that, to his knowledge, Luther and Melancthon advised the king of England not to break off his marriage with the queen, his wife; but, besides her, also to wed another.”\* This, again, is a secret we were ignorant of: but a prince, so well informed, says he knows it; and adds, that they ought to allow him this remedy so much the readier, because he demands it only “for the salvation of his soul.” “I am resolved,” proceeds he, “to remain no longer in the snares of the devil; NEITHER CAN I, NEITHER WILL I, withdraw myself but by this way; wherefore I beg of Luther, of Melancthon, of Bucer himself, to give me a certificate, that I may embrace it. But, if they apprehend that such a certificate may turn to scandal at this time, and prejudice the gospel cause, should it be printed, I desire at least they will give me a declaration in writing, that God would not be offended should I marry in private; and that they will seek for means to make this marriage public in due time, to the end that the woman I shall wed may not pass for a dishonest person, otherwise, in process of time, the church would be scandalized.”† Then he assures them that “they need not fear lest this second marriage should make him injure his first wife, or even separate himself from her; since, on the contrary, he is determined on this occasion to carry his cross, and leave his dominions to their common children. Let them, therefore, grant me,” continues this prince, “in the name of God, what I request of them, to the end that I may both live and die more cheerfully for the gospel cause, and more willingly undertake the defense of it; and, on my part, I will do whatsoever they shall in reason ask of me, whether they demand the revenues of monasteries, or other things of a similar nature.”‡

3.—Continuation of it—the landgrave proposes to have recourse to the emperor, and even to the Pope, in case of refusal.

We see how artfully he insinuates the reasons which he, who knew them so thoroughly, was sensible would have most influence on them; and, as he foresaw that scandal was the thing they would most dread, he adds, “That already the ecclesiastics hated the Protestants to such a degree, that they would not hate them more or less for this new article allowing polygamy: but if, contrary to his expectation, Melancthon and Luther should prove inexorable, many designs ran in his head—amongst others, that of applying to the emperor for this dispensation, whatever money it might cost him.”§ This was a ticklish point—“For,” continues he, “there is no likelihood of the emperor’s granting this permission without a dispensation from the Pope, for which I care but little,” says he;|| “but for that of the emperor I ought not to despise it, though I should make but little account of that too, did I not otherwise believe that God had rather allowed than forbidden what I wish for; and if the attempt I make on this side (that is upon

\* Inst., N. 6, et seq Ibid., N. 10. Ibid., N. 11, 12.

† Ibid., N. 13.

§ Ibid., N. 14.

‡ Ibid., N. 12.

| Ibid., N. 15, et seq.

Luther) succeed not, a human fear urges me to demand the emperor's consent, certain as I am to obtain all I please, upon giving a round sum of money to some one of his ministers. But although I would not for any thing in the world withdraw myself from the gospel, or be engaged in any affair that might be contrary to its interest, I am, nevertheless, afraid lest the imperialists should draw me into something not conducive to the interests of this cause and party. I, therefore, call on them," concludes he, "to afford me the redress I expect, lest I should go seek it in some other place less agreeable; desirous a thousand times rather to owe my repose to their permission than to all other human permissions, I desire to have in writing the opinion of Luther, Melancthon, and Bucer, in order that I may amend myself, and with a good conscience approach the sacrament.

"Given at Melsinguen, the Sunday after St. Catharine's day, 1539.

"PHILIP, Landgrave of Hesse."

## II.—DOCUMENT IN LATIN AND ENGLISH.

### THE CONSULTATION OF LUTHER AND THE OTHER PROTESTANT DOCTORS CONCERNING POLYGAMY.

To the most serene Prince and Lord Philip Landgrave of Hesse, Count of Katzenlembogen, of Diets, of Ziegenhain, and Nidda, our gracious Lord, we wish above all things the Grace of God through Jesus Christ.

Most Serene Prince and Lord,

I. Postquam vestra Celsitudo per Dominum Bucerum diuturnas conscientiae suae molestias, nonnullas simulque considerationes indicari curavit, addito scripto seu instructione quam illi vestra Celsitudo tradidit; licet ita properanter expedire responsum difficile sit, nolimus tamen Dominum Bucerum, reditum utique maturantem, sine scripto dimittere.

II. Imprimis sumus ex animo recreati, et Deo gratias agimus, quod vestram Celsitudinem difficili morbo liberaverit, petimusque, ut Deus Celsitudinem vestram in corpore et animo confortare et conservare dignetur.

III. Nam prout Celsitudo vestra videt, pauperula et misera Ecclesia est exigua et derelicta, indigens probris Dominis Regentibus, sicut non dubitamus Deum aliquos conservatu-

I. We have been informed by Bucer, and in the instruction which your Highness gave him, have read, the trouble of mind, and the uneasiness of conscience your Highness is under at this present; and although it seemed to us very difficult so speedily to answer the doubts proposed; nevertheless, we would not permit the said Bucer, who was urgent for his return to your Highness, to go away without an answer in writing.

II. It has been a subject of the greatest joy to us, and we have praised God, for that he has recovered your Highness from a dangerous fit of sickness, and we pray that he will long continue this blessing of perfect health both in body and mind.

III. Your Highness is not ignorant how great need our poor, miserable, little, and abandoned church stands in of virtuous princes and rulers to protect her; and we doubt

ram, quantumvis tentationes diversæ occurrant.

IV. Circa quæstionem quam nobis Bucerus proposuit, hæc nobis occurrunt consideratione digna: Celsitudo vestra per se ipsam satis perspicit quantum differant universalem legem condere, vel in certo casu gravibus de causis ex concessione divinâ, dispensatione uti; nam contra Deum locum non habet dispensatio.

V. Nunc suadere non possumus, ut introducatur publicè, et velut lege sanciantur permissio pluresquàm unam uxores ducendi. Si aliquid hac de re prælo committeretur, facilè intelligit vestra Celsitudo, id præcepti instar intellectum et acceptatum iri, unde multa scandala et difficultates orirentur. Consideret, quæsumus, Celsitudo vestra quàm sinistrè acciperetur, si quis convinceretur hanc legem in Germaniam introduxisse, quæ sæternarum litium et inquietudinum (quod timendum) futurum esset seminarium.

VI. Quod opponi potest, quod coram Deo æquum est id omninò permittendum, hoc certâ ratione et conditione est accipiendum. Si res est mandata et necessaria, verum est quod objicitur; si nec mandata, nec necessaria sit alias circumstantias oportet expendere, ut ad propositam questionem propius accedamus: Deus matrimonium instituit ut tantùm duarum et non plurium personarum esset societas, si natura non esset corrupta; hoc intendit illa sententia: *Erunt duo in carne una*, idque primatùs fuit observatum.

VII. Sed Lamech pluralitatem uxorum in matrimonium invexit,

not but God will always supply her with some such, although from time to time he threatens to deprive her of them, and proves her by sundry temptations.

IV. These things seem to us of greatest importance in the question which Bucer has proposed to us: your Highness sufficiently of yourself comprehends the difference there is betwixt settling an universal law, and using (for urgent reasons and with God's permission) a dispensation in a particular case; for it is otherwise evident that no dispensation can take place against the first of all laws, the divine law.

V. We can not at present advise to introduce publicly, and establish as a law in the New Testament, that of the Old, which permitted to have more wives than one. Your Highness is sensible, should any such thing be printed, that it would be taken for a precept, whence infinite troubles and scandals would arise. We beg your Highness to consider the dangers a man would be exposed unto, who should be convicted of having brought into Germany such a law, which would divide families, and involve them in endless strifes and disturbances.

VI. As to the objection that may be made, that what is just in God's sight ought absolutely to be permitted, it must be answered in this manner. If that which is just before God, be besides commanded and necessary, the objection is true: if it be neither necessary nor commanded, other circumstances, before it be permitted, must be attended to; and to come to the question in hand: God hath instituted marriage to be a society of two persons and no more, supposing nature were not corrupted; and this is the sense of that text of Genesis, "There shall be two in one flesh," and this was observed at the beginning.

VII. Lamech was the first that married many wives, and the Scrip-

quod de illo Scriptura memorat tanquam introductum contra primam regulam.

VIII. Apud infideles tamen fuit consuetudine receptum; postea Abraham quoque et posterius ejus plures duxerunt uxores. Certum est hoc postmodum lege Mosis permissum fuisse, teste Scriptura, Deuter. 2, l. 1, ut homo haberet duas uxores: nam Deus fragili naturæ aliquid indulgit. Cum verò principio et creationi consentaneum sit unicâ uxore contentum vivere, hujusmodi lex est laudabilis, et ab Ecclesiâ acceptanda, non lex huic contraria statuenda; nam Christus repetit hanc sententiam: *Erunt duo in carne una*, Matth. xix, et in memoriam revocat quale matrimonium ante humanam fragilitatem esse debuisset.

IX. Certis tamen casibus locus est dispensationi. Si quis apud exterarum nationes captivus ad curam corporis et sanitatem, inibi alteram uxorem superinduceret; vel si quis haberet leprosam; his casibus alteram ducere cum consilio sui Pastoris, non intentione novam legem inducendi, sed suæ necessitati consulendi, hunc nescimus, quâ ratione damnare licerit.

X. Cum igitur aliud sit inducere legem, aliud uti dispensatione, obsecramus vestram Celsitudinem sequentia velit considerare.

Primò ante omnia cavendum, ne hæc res inducatur in orbem ad modum legis, quam sequendi libera omnium sit potestas. Deinde considerare dignetur vestra Celsitudo scandalum nimium, quod Evangelii hostes exclamaturi sint, nos similes esse Ana-

ture witnesses that this custom was introduced contrary to the first Institution.

VIII. It nevertheless passed into custom among infidel nations; and we even find afterwards, that Abraham and his posterity had many wives. It is also certain from Deuteronomy, that the law of Moses permitted it afterwards, and that God made an allowance for frail nature. Since it is then suitable to the creation of men, and to the first establishment of their society, that each one be content with one wife, it thence follows that the law enjoining it is praiseworthy; that it ought to be received in the church; and no law contrary thereto be introduced into it, because Jesus Christ has repeated in the nineteenth chapter of St. Matthew that text of Genesis, "There shall be two in one flesh:" and brings to man's remembrance what marriage ought to have been before it degenerated from its purity.

IX. In certain cases, however, there is room for dispensation. For example, if a married man, detained captive in a distant country, should there take a second wife, in order to preserve or recover his health, or that his own became leprous, we see not how we should condemn, in these cases, such a man as, by the advice of his pastor, should take another wife, provided it were not with a design of introducing a new law, but with an eye only to his own particular necessities.

X. Since then the introducing a new law, and the using a dispensation with respect to the same law, are two very different things, we entreat your Highness to take what follows into consideration.

In the first place, above all things, care must be taken, that plurality of wives be not introduced into the world by way of law, for every man to follow as he thinks fit. In the second place, may it please your Highness to reflect on the dismal

... baptistis, qui simul plures duxerunt uxores. Item Evangelicos eam secari libertatem plures simul ducendi, quæ in Turcia in usu est.

XI. Item, principum facta latius spargi quàm privatorum consideret.

XII. Item, consideret privatas personas, hujusmodi principum facta audientes, faciliè eadem sibi permissa persuadere, prout apparet talia faciliè irrepere.

XIII. Item, considerandum Celsitudinem vestram abundare nobilitate efferi spiritûs, in quâ multi, uti in aliis quoque terris sint, qui propter amplos proventus, quibus ratione cathedralium beneficiorum perfruuntur, valdè evangelio adversantur. Non ignoramus ipsi magnorum nobilium valdè insulsa dicta; et qualem se nobilitas et subdita ditio erga Celsitudinem vestram sit præbitura, si publica introductio fiat, haud difficile est arbitrari.

XIV. Item Celsitudo vestra, quæ Dei singularis est gratia, apud reges et potentes etiam exteros magno est in honore et respectu; apud quos meritò est, quòd timeat ne hæc res pariat nominis diminutionem. Cùm igitur hic multa scandala confluant, rogamus Celsitudinem vestram, ut hanc rem maturo judicio expendere velit.

XV. Illud quoque est verum quòd Celsitudinem vestram omni modo rogamus et hortamur, ut fornicationem et adulterium fugiat. Habuimus quoque, ut, quod res est, loquamur, longo tempore non parvum mærorem, quòd intellexerimus vestram Celsitudinem ejusmodi impuritate oneratam, quam divina ultio, morbi, aliaque pericula sequi possent.

XVI. Etiam rogamus Celsitudinem vestram ne talia extra matrimo-

scandal which would not fail to happen, if occasion be given to the enemies of the gospel to exclaim, that we are like the Anabaptists, who have several wives at once, and the Turks, who take as many wives as they are able to maintain.

XI. In the third place, that the actions of princes are more widely spread than those of private men.

XII. Fourthly, that inferiors are no sooner informed what their superiors do, but they imagine they may do the same, and by that means licentiousness becomes universal.

XIII. Fifthly, that your Highness's estates are filled with an untractable nobility, for the most part very averse to the gospel, on account of the hopes they are in, as in other countries, of obtaining the benefices of cathedral churches, the revenues whereof are very great. We know the impertinent discourses vented by the most illustrious of your nobility, and it is easily seen how they and the rest of your subjects would be disposed, in case your Highness should authorize such a novelty.

XIV. Sixthly, that your Highness, by the singular grace of God, hath a great reputation in the empire and foreign countries; and it is to be feared lest the execution of this project of a double marriage should greatly diminish this esteem and respect. The concurrence of so many scandals obliges us to beseech your Highness to examine the thing with all the maturity of judgment God has endowed you with.

XV. With no less earnestness do we entreat your Highness, by all means, to avoid fornication and adultery; and, to own the truth sincerely, we have a long time been sensibly grieved to see your Highness abandoned to such impurities, which might be followed by the effects of the divine vengeance, distempers, and many other dangerous consequences.

XVI. We also beg of your Highness not to entertain a notion, that

nium, levia peccata velit aestimare, sicut mundus hæc ventis tradere et parvi pendere solet: Verùm Deus impudicitiam sæpè severissimè punivit: nam poena diluvii tribuitur regentibus adulteriis. Item adulterium Davidis est severum vindictæ divinæ exemplum, et Paulus sæpius ait; Deus non irridetur. Adulteri non introibunt in regnum Dei: nam fidei obedientia comes esse debet, ut non contra conscientiam agamus, 1 Timoth. iii. Si cor nostrum non reprehenderit nos, possumus læti Deum invocare; et Rom. viii. Si carnalia desideria spiritu mortificaverimus, vivemus; si autem secundum carnem ambulemus: hoc est, si contra conscientiam, agamus, moriemur.

XVII. Hæc referrimus, ut consideret Deum ob talia vitia non ridere, prout aliqui audaces faciunt, et ethnicas cogitationes animo foveant. Libenter quoque intelleximus vestram Celsitudinem ob ejusmodi vitia angere et conqueri. Incumbunt Celsitudini vestrae negotia totum mundum concernentia. Accedit Celsitudinis vestrae complexio subtilis, et minimè robusta, ac pauci somni, unde merito corpori parcendum esset, quemadmodum multi alii facere coguntur.

XVIII. Legitur de laudatissimo Principe Scanderbego, qui multa præclara facinora patravit contra duos Turcarum Imperatores, Amurathem et Mahumetem, et Græciam dum

the use of women out of marriage is but a light and trifling fault, as the world is used to imagine; since God hath often chastised impurity with the most severe punishment: and that of the deluge is attributed to the adulteries of the great ones; and the adultery of David has afforded a terrible instance of the divine vengeance; and St. Paul repeats frequently, that God is not mocked with impunity, and that adulterers shall not enter into the kingdom of God. For it is said, in the second chapter of the first Epistle to Timothy, that obedience must be the companion of faith, in order to avoid acting against conscience; and in the third chapter of the first of St. John, if our heart condemn us not, we may call upon the name of God with joy: and in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, if by the spirit we mortify the desires of the flesh, we shall live: but, on the contrary, we shall die, if we walk according to the flesh, that is, if we act against our own consciences.

XVII. We have related these passages, to the end that your Highness may consider seriously that God looks not on the vice of impurity as a laughing matter, as is supposed by those audacious libertines, who entertain heathenish notions on this subject. We are pleased to find that your Highness is troubled with remorse of conscience for these disorders. The management of the most important affairs in the world is now incumbent on your Highness, who is of a very delicate and tender complexion; sleeps but little; and these reasons, which have obliged so many prudent persons to manage their constitutions, are more than sufficient to prevail with your Highness to imitate them.

XVIII. We read of the incomparable Scanderbeg, who so frequently defeated the two most powerful emperors of the Turks, Amurat II. and Mahomet II., and whilst alive, pre



viveret, feliciter tuitus est, ac conservavit. Hic suos milites sæpiùs ad castimoniam hortari auditus est, et dicere, nullam rem fortibus viris æquè animos demere ac Venerem. Item quòd si vestra Celsitudo insuper alteram uxorem haberet, et nollet pravis affectibus et consuetudinibus repugnare, adhuc non esset vestræ Celsitudini consultum ac prospectum. Oportet unumquemque in externis istis suorum membrorum esse dominum, uti Paulus scribit: Curate ut membra vestra sint arma justitia. Quare vestra Celsitudo in consideratione aliarum causarum, nempe scandalì, curarum, laborum ac solitudinum, et corporis infirmitatis velit hanc rem æquâ lance perpendere, et simul in memoriam revocare, quòd Deus ei ex modernâ conjuge pulchram sobolem utriusque sexûs dederit, ita ut contentus hâc esse possit. Quot alii in suo matrimonio debent patientiam exercere ad vitandum scandalum? Nobis non sedet animo Celsitudinem vestram ad tam difficilem novitatem impellere, aut inducere; nam ditio vestræ Celsitudinis, aliique nos impeterent, quod nobis eò minus ferendum esset, quòd ex præcepto divino nobis incumbat matrimonium, omniaque humana ad divinam institutionem dirigere, atque in eâ quoad possibile conservare, omneque scandalum remove.

XIX. Is jam est mos sæculi, ut culpa omnis in Prædicatores confertur, si quid difficultatis incidat; et humanum cor in summæ et inferioris conditionis hominibus instabile, unde diversa pertimescenda.

XX. Si autem vestra Celsitudo ab impudicâ vitâ non abstineat, quod dicit sibi impossibile, optaremus Celsitudinem vestram in meliori statu

served Greece from their tyranny, that he often exhorted his soldiers to chastity, and said to them, that there was nothing so hurtful to men of their profession, as venereal pleasures. And if your Highness, after marrying a second wife, were not to forsake those licentious disorders, the remedy proposed would be to no purpose. Every one ought to be master of his own body in external actions, and see, according to the expression of St. Paul, that his members be the arms of justice. May it please your Highness, therefore, impartially to examine the considerations of scandal, of labors, of care, of trouble, and of distempers, which have been represented. And at the same time remember that God has given you a numerous issue of such beautiful children of both sexes by the princess your wife, that you have reason to be satisfied therewith. How many others, in marriage, are obliged to the exercise and practice of patience, from the motive only of avoiding scandal? We are far from urging on your Highness to introduce so difficult a novelty into your family. By so doing, we should draw upon ourselves not only the reproaches and persecution of those of Hesse, but of all other people. The which would be, so much the less supportable to us, as God commands us in the ministry which we exercise, as much as we are able, to regulate marriage, and all the other duties of human life, according to the divine Institution, and maintain them in that state, and remove all kind of scandal.

XIX. It is now customary among worldlings, to lay the blame of every thing upon the preachers of the gospel. The heart of man is equally fickle in the more elevated and lower stations of life; and much have we to fear on that score.

XX. As to what your Highness says, that it is not possible for you to abstain from this impure life, we wish you were in a better state before God,



esse coram Deo, et securâ conscientiâ vivere ad propriæ animæ salutem, et ditionum ac subditorum emolumentum.

XXI. Quòd si denique vestra Celsitudo omninò concluderit, adhuc unam conjugem ducere, judicamus id secretò faciendum, ut superiùs de dispensatione dictum, nempè ut tantùm vestræ Celsitudini, illi personæ, ac paucis personis fidelibus constet Celsitudinis vestræ animus, et conscientia sub sigillo confessionis. Hinc non sequuntur alicujus momenti contradictiones aut scandala. Nihil enim est inusitati Principes concubinas alere; et quamvis non omnibus è plebe constaret rei ratio, tamen prudentiores intelligerent, et magis placeret hæc moderata vivendi ratio, quàm adulterium et alii belluini et impudici actus; nec curandi aliorum sermones, si rectè cum conscientiâ agatur. Sic et in tantum hoc approbamus: nam quod circa matrimonium in lege Mosis fuit permissum, Evangelium non revocat, aut vetat, quod externum regimen non immutat, sed adfert æternam justitiam et æternam vitam, et orditur veram obedientiam erga Deum, et conatur corruptam naturam reparare.

XXII. Habet itaque Celsitudo vestra non tantùm omnium nostrùm testimonium in casu necessitatis, sed etiam antecedentes nostras considerationes quas rogamus, ut vestra Celsitudo tanquam laudatus, sapiens, et Christianus Princeps velit ponderare. Oramus quoque Deum, ut velit Celsitudinem vestram ducere ac regere ad suam laudem et vestræ Celsitudinis animæ salutem.

XXIII. Quod attinet ad consilium hanc rem apud Cæsarem tractandi; existimamus illum, adulterium inter minora peccata numerare; nam mag-

that you lived with a secure conscience, and labored for the salvation of your own soul, and the welfare of your subjects.

XXI. But after all, if your Highness is fully resolved to marry a second wife, we judge it ought to be done secretly, as we have said with respect to the dispensation demanded on the same account, that is, that none but the person you shall wed, and a few trusty persons, know of the matter, and they, too, obliged to secrecy under the seal of confession. Hence no contradiction nor scandal of moment is to be apprehended; for it is no extraordinary thing for princes to keep concubines; and though the vulgar should be scandalized thereat, the more intelligent would doubt of the truth, and prudent persons would approve of this moderate kind of life, preferably to adultery, and other brutal actions. There is no need of being much concerned for what men will say, provided all goes right with conscience. So far do we approve it, and in those circumstances only by us specified; for the gospel hath neither recalled nor forbid what was permitted in the law of Moses with respect to marriage. Jesus Christ has not changed the external economy, but added justice only, and life everlasting, for reward. He teaches the true way of obeying God, and endeavors to repair the corruption of nature.

XXII. Your Highness hath therefore, in this writing, not only the approbation of us all, in case of necessity, concerning what you desire, but also the reflections we have made thereupon; we beseech you to weigh them, as becoming a virtuous, wise, and Christian prince. We also beg of God to direct all for his glory and your Highness's salvation.

XXIII. As to your Highness's thought of communicating this affair to the emperor before it be concluded, it seems to us that this prince counts

noperè verendum, illum Papisticâ, Cardinalitiâ, Italicâ, Hispanicâ, Saracenicâ imbutum fide, non curaturum vestræ Celsitudinis postulatum, et in proprium emolumentum vanis verbis sustentaturum, sicut intelligimus perfidum ac fallacem virum esse, morisque Germanici oblitum.

XXIV. Videt Celsitudo vestra ipsa, quod nullis necessitatibus Christianis sincerè consulit. Turcam sinit imperturbatum, excitat tantum rebelliones in Germaniâ, ut Burgundicam potentiam efferat. Quare optandum ut nulli Christiani Principes illius infidis machinationibus se misceant. Deus conservet vestram Celsitudinem. Nos ad serviendum vestræ Celsitudini sumus promptissimi. Datum Vittenbergæ, die Mercurii post festum Sancti Nicolai, 1539.

Vestræ Celsitudinis parati ac subjecti servi,

MARTINUS LUTHER.  
PHILIPPUS MELANCTHON.  
MARTINUS BUCERUS.  
ANTONIUS CORVINUS.  
ADAM.  
JOANNES LENINGUS.  
JUSTUS WINTFERTE.  
DIONYSIUS MELANTHER.

adultery among the lesser sorts of sins; and it is very much to be feared lest his faith being of the same stamp with that of the Pope, the Cardinals, the Italians, the Spaniards, and the Saracens, he make light of your Highness's proposal, and turn it to his own advantage by amusing your Highness with vain words. We know he is deceitful and perfidious, and has nothing of the German in him.

XXIV. Your Highness sees, that he uses no sincere endeavor to redress the grievances of Christendom; that he leaves the Turk unmolested, and labors for nothing but to divide the empire, that he may raise up the house of Austria on its ruins. It is therefore very much to be wished that no Christian prince would give into his pernicious schemes. May God preserve your Highness. We are most ready to serve your Highness. Given at Wittenberg the Wednesday after the feast of Saint Nicholas, 1539.

Your Highness's most humble and most obedient subjects and servants,

MARTIN LUTHER.  
PHILIP MELANCTHON.  
MARTIN BUCER.  
ANTONY CORVIN.  
ADAM.  
JOHN LENINGUE.  
JUSTUS WINTFERTE.  
DENIS MELANTHER.

#### CERTIFICATE OF THE NOTARY PUBLIC.

Ego Georgius Nuspicher, acceptâ à Cæsare potestate, Notarius publicus et Scriba, testor hoc meo chirographo publicè quod hanc copiam ex vero et inviolato originali propria manu à Philippo Melancthone exarato, ad instantiam et petitionem mei clementissimi Domini et Principis Hassiæ ipse scripserim, et quinque foliis numero exceptâ inscriptione complexus sim, etiam omnia propriè et diligenter auscultârim et contu-

I George Nuspicher, Notary Imperial, bear testimony by this present act, written and signed with my own hand, that I have transcribed this present copy from the true original which is in Melancthon's own handwriting, and hath been faithfully preserved to this present time, at the request of the most serene Prince of Hesse; and have examined with the greatest exactness every line and every word, and collated them with

lerim, et in omnibus cum originali et subscriptione nominum concordet. De quâ re testor propriâ manu.

GEORGIUS NUSPICHER,  
Notarius.

the same original; and have found them conformable therein, not only in the things themselves, but also in the signs manual, and have delivered the present copy in five leaves of good paper, whereof I bear witness.

GEORGE NUSPICHER,  
Notary.

### III.—DOCUMENT IN LATIN AND ENGLISH.

Instrumentum Copulationis Philippi Landgravii, et Margaretæ de Saal.

*In nomine Domini Amen.*

Notum sit omnibus et singulis, qui hoc publicum instrumentum vident, audiunt, legunt, quòd Anno post Christum natum 1540, die Mercurii mensis Martii, post meridiem circa secundam circiter, Indictionis Anno 13, potentissimi et invictissimi Romanorum Imperatoris Caroli-quinti, clementissimi nostri Domini Anno regiminis 21, coram me infrascripto Notario et teste, Rotemburgi in arce comparuerint serenissimus Princeps et Dominus Philippus Landgravius Comes in Catznellenbogen, Dietz, Ziegenhain, et Niddâ, cum aliquibus suæ Celsitudinis consiliariis ex unâ parte; et honesta, ac virtuosa Virgo Margareta de Saal, cum aliquibus ex suâ consanguinitate ex alterâ parte; illâ intentione et voluntate coram me publico Notario ac teste publicè confessi sunt, ut matrimonio copulenter; et postea ante memoratus meus clementissimus Dominus et Princeps Landgravius Philippus per Reverendum Dominum Dionysium Melanderum suæ Celsitudinis Concionatorem, curavit proponi fermè hunc sensum. Cùm omnia aperta sint oculis Dei, et homines pauca lateant, et sua Celsitudo velit cum nominatâ virgine Margaretâ matrimonio copulari, etsi prior suæ Celsitudinis conjux adhuc sit in vivis, ut hoc non tribuatur levitati et curiositati, ut evitetur scandalum, et

The Marriage Contract of Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, with Margaret de Saal.

*In the name of God, Amen.*

Be it known to all those, as well in general as in particular, who shall see, hear, or read this public instrument, that in the year 1540, on Wednesday, the fourth day of the month of March, at two o'clock or thereabouts, in the afternoon, the thirteenth year of the Indiction, and the twenty-first of the reign of the most puissant and most victorious Emperor Charles V., our most gracious lord; the most serene Prince and Lord Philip Landgrave of Hesse, Count of Catznellenbogen, of Dietz, of Ziegenhain, and Nidda, with some of his Highness's Counselors, on one side, and the good and virtuous Lady Margaret de Saal with some of her relations, on the other side, have appeared before me, Notary, and witness underwritten, in the city of Rotenburg, in the castle of the same city, with the design and will publicly declared before me, Notary public and witness, to unite themselves by marriage; and accordingly my most gracious Lord and Prince Philip the Landgrave hath ordered this to be proposed by the Reverend Denis Melander, preacher to his Highness, much to the sense as follows:—"Whereas the eye of God searches all things, and but little escapes the knowledge of men, his Highness declares that his will is to

nominatæ virginis et illius honestæ consanguinitatis honor et fama non patiatur; edicit sua Celsitudo hîc coram Deo, et in suam conscientiam et animam hoc non fieri ex levitate, aut curiositate, nec ex aliquâ vilipensione juris et superiorum, sed urgeri aliquibus gravibus et inevitabilibus necessitatibus conscientiæ et corporis, adeo ut impossibile sit sine alia superinducta legitima conjuge corpus suum et animam salvare. Quam multiplicem causam etiam sua Celsitudo multis prædoctis, piis, prudentibus, et Christianis Prædicatoribus antehac indicavit, qui etiam consideratis inevitabilibus causis id ipsum suaserunt ad suæ Celsitudinis animæ et conscientiæ consulendum. Quæ causa et necessitas etiam Serenissimam Principem Christianam Ducissam Saxonis, suæ Celsitudinis primam legitimam conjugem, utpotè altâ principali prudentiâ et piâ mente præditam novit, ut suæ Celsitudinis tanquam dilectissimi mariti animæ et corpori serviret, et honor Dei promoveretur ad gratiosè consentiendum. Quemadmodum suæ Celsitudinis hæc superrelata syngrapha testatur; et ne cui scandalum detur eò quòd duas conjuges habere moderno tempore sit insolitum; etsi in hoc casu Christianum et licitum sit, non vult sua Celsitudo publicè coram pluribus consuetas ceremonias usurpare, et palàm nuptias celebrare cum memoratâ virgine Margaretâ de Saal; sed hîc in privato et silentio in præsentia subscriptorum testium volunt invicem jungi matrimonio. Finito hoc sermone nominati Philippus et Margareta sunt matrimonio juncti, et unaquæque persona alteram sibi desponsam agnovit et acceptavit, adjunctâ mutuâ fidelitatis promissione in nomine Domini. Et antememoratus princeps ac Dominus ante hunc actum me infrascriptum Notarium requisivit, ut desuper unum aut plura instrumenta conficerem, et mihi etiam tanquam personæ publicæ, verbo ac

wed the said Lady Margaret de Saal, although the princess his wife be still living, and that this action may not be imputed to inconstancy or curiosity; to avoid scandal and maintain the honor of the said Lady, and the reputation of her kindred, his Highness makes oath here before God, and upon his soul and conscience, that he takes her to wife through no levity nor curiosity, nor from any contempt of law, or superiors; but that he is obliged to it by such important, such inevitable necessities of body and conscience, that it is impossible for him to save either body or soul, without adding another wife to his first. All which his Highness hath laid before many learned, devout, prudent, and Christian preachers, and consulted them upon it. And these great men, after examining the motives represented to them, have advised his Highness to put his soul and conscience at ease by this double marriage. And the same cause and the same necessity have obliged the most serene Princess, Christina Duchess of Saxony, his Highness's first lawful wife, out of her great prudence and sincere devotion, for which she is so much to be commended, freely to consent and admit of a partner, to the end that the soul and body of her most dear spouse may run no further risk, and the glory of God may be increased, as the deed written with this Princess's own hand sufficiently testifies. And lest occasion of scandal be taken from its not being the custom to have two wives, although this be Christian and lawful in the present case, his Highness will not solemnize these nuptials in the ordinary way, that is, publicly before many people, and with the wonted ceremonies, with the said Margaret de Saal; but both the one and the other will join themselves in wedlock, privately and without noise, in presence only of the witnesses underwritten."—After Melander had finished his discourse, the

fide Principis addixit ac promisit, se omnia hæc inviolabiliter semper ac firmiter servaturum, in præsentia reverendorum prædoctorum Dominorum M. Philippi Melanthonis, M. Martini Bucer, Dionysii Melandri, etiam in præsentia strenuorum ac præstantium Eberhardi de Than Electoralis Consilarii, Hermanni de Malsberg, Hermanni de Hundelshausen, Domini Joannis Fegg Cancellariæ, Lodolphi Schenck, ac honestæ ac virtuosæ Dominæ Annæ natæ de Miltitz viduæ defuncti Joannis de Saal memoratæ sponsæ matris, tanquam ad hunc actum requisitorum testium.

Et ego Balthasar Rand de Fulda, potestate Cæsaris Notarius publicus, qui huic sermoni, instructioni, et matrimoniali sponsioni, et copulationi cum suprâ memoratis testibus interfui, et hæc omnia et singula audiui, et vidi, et tanquam Notarius publicus requisitus fui, hoc instrumentum publicum meâ manu scripsi, et subscripsi, et consueto sigillo munivi, in fidem et testimonium.

BALTHASAR RAND.

said Philip and the said Margaret accepted of each other for husband and wife, and promised mutual fidelity in the name of God. The said Prince hath required of me, Notary underwritten, to draw him one or more collated copies of this contract, and hath also promised, on the word and faith of a prince, to me a public person, to observe it inviolably, always and without alteration, in presence of the reverend and most learned masters Philip Melanthon, Martin Bucer, Denis Melander; and likewise in the presence of the illustrious and valiant Eberhard de Than, counselor of his electoral Highness of Saxony, Herman de Malsberg, Herman de Hundelshausen, the Lord John Fegg of the Chancery, Rudolph Schenck; and also in the presence of the most honorable and most virtuous Lady Anne of the family of Miltitz, widow of the late John de Saal, and mother of the spouse, all in quality of requisite witnesses for the validity of the present act.

And I Balthasar Rand, of Puld, Notary public imperial, who was present at the discourse, instruction, marriage, espousals, and union aforesaid, with the said witnesses, and have heard and seen all that passed, have written and subscribed the present contract, being requested so to do; and set to it the usual seal, for a testimony of the truth thereof

BALTHASAR RAND.

END OF VOLUME I.



**14 DAY USE**  
**RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED**  
**LOAN DEPT.**

This book is due on the last date stamped below,  
or on the date to which renewed. Renewals only:  
Tel. No. 642-3405  
Renewals may be made 4 days prior to date due.  
Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

DEC 5 1970 83

REC'D LD NOV 24 10-2 PM 4 2  
JUN 1 8 1986

AUG 28 1986

AUTO. DISC. FEB 22 '87

NOV 16 1989

AUTO DISC NOV 05 1989

LD21A-60m-8,'70  
(N8837s10)476-A-32

General Library  
University of California  
Berkeley

GENERAL LIBRARY - U.C. BERKELEY



8000586187



